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Of human persons and animals
Scholastic animalism and the metaphysics of human nature

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Of Human Persons and Animals

Scholastic Animalism and the Metaphysics of Human Nature

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*Doctoral Thesis
King's College London*

Abstract

Background

Discussion as to whether the essence of human nature is primarily a matter of biology or of psychology has been going on for over two thousand years. Greek thought was divided between views such as Aristotle's, who saw a human being like you or me as a single living substance, an animal, and argued for persistence based on biological nature as a member of a species, and those of Plato, who identified a human being with his soul, trapped in his body, as two separable entities. Today, the debate continues between the animalists on one hand, for whom I am identical to my living body, and personalists on the other, who see each human being as a person, a self-conscious, rational entity. As such, animalists, such as van Inwagen and Olson, argue for a human being's persistence in terms of his biological life, while personalists, most notably, Baker, Shoemaker and Parfit, in sympathy with Locke, require only the presence of mind.

However, while these two positions do not look to be incompatible, the accounts are usually set up in such a way that the acceptance of one is the denial of the other. For most animalists, for example, 'person' is just a phase sortal term, and human beings cannot be persons essentially, given that personhood requires actually occurrent mental properties. This is anti-personalism. Likewise, most personalists tend to be anti-animalists. Some may allow that a human being could share a decomposition with an animal, but deny that he could be identical to one. In terms of persistence, if one imagines that the cerebrum of a human being *A* is removed and placed in the cerebrumless body of another human being, *B*, the animalist will identify the living but cerebrumless human animal with *A*, while the personalist would say that *A* has gone with his consciousness, and now resides in the body of *B*. Furthermore, the personalist will now want to say that human animal *B* is the same person, and therefore the same human being, as *A*, while, for the animalist, *A* is still the same human animal/human being that he was, but he is no longer a person.

Nonetheless, neither view really seems to be satisfactory. In the case of animalism, our belief that we are essentially persons, and that therefore that the persistent vegetative state patient in the bed is still a person, is put under fire. On the other hand, for the personalist, a human being is divided into the two things: a human animal and a person, to the end that human being *A* has become human being *B*, despite the fact that his body, a living human animal, has not moved from its bed.

It is very difficult to deny that among the members of the kingdom animalia, human beings are mentally superior in various ways. However, it is just as doubtful that non-human animals do not have brains capable of thought, and therefore that a person cannot be just the thinking part of a human animal, given that other animals have mental properties too. Alternatively, then, we might regard human beings as essentially both persons and animals, or 'rational animals', the preferred term of Aristotelianism. The holistic account sees each human being as a human person, according to its species, just as much as a human animal. There are various ways for which this might be argued, but the version I will defend here I have called scholastic

animalism, a bio-psychological account of human nature attributed to St Thomas Aquinas. For Aquinas, the concept of a human being who is not a person is meaningless, and only a complete living body can be a complete living person, though there is the possibility of a lesser existence between bodily death and final resurrection, in accordance with biblical Scripture.

Nonetheless, scholastic animalism, which may be defined as an account of human nature whereby the property of human personhood just is the property of human animality, can be made sense of without appeal to biblical principles, such as the afterlife and final resurrection, given that its main benefit is the sense it makes of questions regarding what kind of being I am now, and when did I first exist. Such matters relate to all kinds of moral questions concerning human rights, both in the womb and out, and so are more than matters of biology. Unlike most personalist theories, scholastic animalism affords each human being intrinsic value just for being human, having a high regard for the body as an essential part of a complete human nature. It is therefore in line with modern medicine, which also sees the mind and body as heavily interconnected.

Hylomorphism about Persons

To understand the true nature of humanity according to scholastic animalism, one must consider first Aquinas' metaphysics of form and matter, a theory taken from Aristotle called hylomorphism. This view considers all natural material substances to be compositions of prime matter and substantial form, where the latter gives existence and structure to the former. In the case of human beings, the substantial form is the rational or intellectual soul, which brings life to the person as well as making him the kind of being he is. Soul in this sense dates back in writing to Homeric poetry, where the concept is tied to life as a kind of principle, a life-force, without which no living being would have life. The Aristotelian concept of soul differs according to the complexity of the living being. Plants are said to have vegetative souls, giving them the usual life processes of living things, while animals additionally have the powers of soul for sensitivity. Humans and more advanced beings, if they should exist, have a rational soul, which as well as incorporating all the other powers of the lesser souls, has intellect, the power of reason. Due to some confusion regarding the concept of rationality around the time he was writing, Aquinas prefers to speak of the intellectual soul of man, which gives him self-consciousness, will and moral reasoning.

The intellectual soul as the form of the material body is said to be incorporeal, incorruptible and weakly subsistent. To be incorporeal is to be non-material, which causes it to give existence to, but not be mixed with, the physical body. As a result, the soul will leave the body upon bodily death and take on a different mode of existence. In accordance with its incorruptible nature, then, it will continue to exist to be reunited with the body once more at final resurrection. While non-human animal souls are also incorporeal, unlike the human soul, they are disposed to destruction, ceasing to exist following the death of the animal. The human soul can only be destroyed by God, say in hell; it has no internal disposition towards destruction. Another important property of the intellectual soul is its subsistence. While not itself a substance, for then man would

not be one complete substance (*unum simpliciter*), the soul is said to be weakly subsistent, giving it the kind of existence akin to an arm or leg; it is not a separate being, but can be seen as ‘this particular thing’, and referenced accordingly. We might compare the soul in man to electricity in a toaster. The electricity is not really a part of the toaster, but without it, the toaster does not function as a toaster; it is homonymously a toaster. Likewise, there is no human being without the soul, but a body and a soul are not two separate beings, but one: a living body.

The above explains on one level what it is to be a human animal, but the concept of human person requires a different kind of study. While the discussion on human nature can be found in Aquinas’ Treatise on Man, the concept of personhood is considered much earlier, on the topic of the Trinity. For Aquinas, God, as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, angels, and human beings are all types of person. The former four are instances of spiritual persons, including the Divine Persons, while human beings have a combined spiritual and material nature. They are material persons with an incorporeal soul. In general, then, a person is defined as a being subsisting in an intellectual nature, a development of Boethius’ earlier definition: “an individual substance of a rational nature”. This definition is applied differently according to the type of person. Angels, for example, are purely spiritual beings, so their intellectual nature is on account of form, which differs between them. Conversely, human beings have their intellectual nature as a result of being material bodies informed by intellective souls. Just as angels differ from each other by having a different form, each human being’s soul is qualitatively different from the next. Souls are ‘made to measure’ in accordance with the kind of body created to receive them.

Coming-to-be and Ceasing-to-be

In order to understand how the hylomorphism of persons benefits an account of the numerical identity of human persons and human animals, it is important to discuss these matters in context. There are two main issues related to real-life events: embryogenesis, or the coming-to-be of human beings, and life after bodily death, or the ceasing-to-be of human beings. Both may be seen as aspects of the metaphysics of personal identity, and for Aquinas, it is assumed that there can be no persistence without personal identity. For this reason, the answer to the question of when each of us began, for Aquinas, is not until the foetus is sufficiently developed to receive the intellective soul.

Personalist theories in general tend to require occurrent mental properties for personhood and therefore for our existence, which puts the burden on them to decide what became of the human non-person in the womb before this. This is known as the Foetus Problem. For Aquinas, the answer is simple: it ceases to exist. From the moment of conception, a principle in the sperm cell called the *virtus formativa*, guides the pregnancy to the next stage. Each stage is marked by the corruption of one form by the generation of the next. During this process, firstly a vegetative soul, then a sensitive soul and finally an intellective soul, the latter of which is infused by God and created *ex nihilo*, comes to inform the organism in turn. It is not the same organism though that is firstly plant-like, then animal-like and then human, but several numerically different beings,

known as intermediaries, because they are not complete substances. Aquinas does not specify at what point God infuses the human soul, but given that the soul's faculties must be able to be actualised, he requires significant brain development. It therefore seems likely that he would place the start of a human being's life sometime during the second trimester, around the event of quickening, which we now know occurs at around seventeen to twenty weeks. Given that most of us think we were once an embryo though, it seems rather hard to accept that the pre-infusion embryo is a numerically different being from us. It also seems more than a bit puzzling that a living organism could be genetically human, but not *a* human.

Nonetheless, contemporary personalism is left with the same puzzles. For some, such as Lynne Rudder Baker, the original embryo does not cease to exist, but instead comes to share a decomposition with the human person. Here, the person is really the self-conscious part of the living organism. Similar views can be found in Shoemaker and Parfit, who take a materialist, but anti-animalist approach to personalism. Unlike scholastic animalism though, contemporary personalism offers an account of the metaphysics of human beings that threatens the very essence of our humanity. Generally-speaking, to call ourselves 'human beings' is not to say anything at all about our nature as persons or animals, but if our humanity is defined according to our human bodies, which are contingent parts of us for most contemporary personalists, then we are not even essentially human. This is Baker's view. The respect in which she calls us 'human persons' is by being persons sharing a decomposition with human animals, which is the equivalent of having a human body. In order to persist, we need only remain persons, but a person not sharing a decomposition with a human animal is no longer a human organism, arguably not even human at all. As Olson points out, we do actually think we are human beings, and if nobody wants to say that a cat is not essentially a cat, why should he be more comfortable in saying that a human being is not essentially a human being?

Aquinas sides whole-heartedly with this view. The pre-infusion embryo, as a separate being from the intellectually ensouled foetus, does not have a human soul, and is therefore not a human being. While there is life from conception, on this view, it is not the life of any human being, and so neither my life nor your life could have preceded the infusion of our human souls. For this reason, just as we are essentially persons, in accordance with the Boethian-Thomistic definition, we are also essentially human beings.

Not only is the scholastic animalist account important for understanding when each of us first came to be, but it also provides an understanding for the circumstances under which we would cease to be. Ordinarily, at the point of bodily death, the person dies with his body, and his soul goes on into the afterlife to await the resurrection of the body, in accordance with the usual interpretation of biblical Scripture. The soul, however, as incorruptible, does not cease to function, but instead takes on a new mode of existence, giving it the ability to continue to exercise its intellectual powers, but in a manner less perfect than the angels'. The reason for this is that the soul was never designed to be without the body – bodily death only came into the world at the fall of man, and was never part of God's original creation. In a sense, then, the soul waits for the day when it will be restored to the body. Nonetheless, there is a debate among Aquinas' scholars as to the

correct interpretation of the account. For some, it should be seen as a follow on from the Treatise on Man, where the person is considered as essentially composed of soul and body, and following the death of the body, ceases to exist. On the other hand, when including some of Aquinas' other writings, particularly on the subject of the Apostles' Creed, purgatory and the communion of Saints, he seems to imply that during the intermediate stage, the person can exist as just a soul, given that a soul is not a person (contra Boethius) and therefore cannot be included in the *assembly of the faithful*, which exists on earth, in purgatory and in heaven. Furthermore, he is also known to refer to the *assembly* as souls. It makes no sense to say that a soul is a member of an assembly, unless the soul in this state is representative of the person, and so it is not clear that Aquinas does not accept the possibility of a disembodied self during the soul's imperfect and incomplete existence.

However, regardless of whether one can exist as a soul for a short time, Aquinas' is clearly open to the possibility of a kind of reversal of the embryogenesis story. Just as the pre-infusion embryo is replaced by the ensouled foetus, he sees it as plausible that a dying human being could reach a state of brain-death, where his mental capacity is reduced to that of a non-human animal, and he leaves behind his living body to enter the afterlife. The living animal in the bed is now in a situation something like the non-human embryo in the womb. Although it looks exactly like a human foetus of say seventeen weeks, it is not a human. Likewise, the non-human animal left behind looks exactly like the human animal that had just been there. All this reinforces Aquinas' original premise that all human animals are human persons and vice versa.

Modern Medicine and Thomism

But is such an extreme view necessary to make the case for the mutual inseparability of the properties of human personhood and human animality? I wish to argue otherwise. While Aquinas' theory of embryogenesis is remarkably sophisticated for the time, and shares many of the ideas confirmed now by modern medicine, without the knowledge, especially of DNA, he was unable to see the unintuitive nature of the belief that a genetically-human living being could be something other than a human being. The most he could have said about the pre-infusion being is that it was part of a process that started with a zygote with a disposition to give way to a series of later beings that would eventually result in a human being. This zygote differs from that of any other species by the formative principle in the sperm cell guiding its human development. Genetics, however, tell us that the zygote itself is already human, not necessarily *a* human at this stage, but definitely not a plant either. Furthermore, we can scientifically date our own existences back to the point when we became individual living organisms, that is, when twinning is no longer a possibility – no later than foetal age fifteen days. This is when cell division completes, and the embryo implants into the uterine lining, and can occur as early as day seven.

According to the Foetus problem, though, if the start of a person's life can only be traced back to implantation, something must be said about the zygote that preceded it. Olson's notion of human-being-dough seems to be the best response. Just as dough can be formed into a number of cookies, and the baking

process puts an end to further division, up until implantation, the zygote can divide in the case of twins or triplets. We might view the zygote (or more correctly the morula at this point) as human-being-dough. It is not itself a living organism, but out of it, there will result in one or more living organisms. This is also supported by evidence in biology, which demonstrates that the morula contains not only the cells that will become the baby, but those of the amniotic sac, the placenta etc. What is anticipated by science, therefore, is that at the moment when further division is no longer possible, and all the cells have their roles decided, there first exists a living human being. This is much earlier than Aquinas' would allow, but it resists the possibility of the being in the womb existing as anything other than a living human animal, complete in personhood. What the hylomorphist must say then is that the human soul is infused by God at this particular moment, sustaining life and guiding development to full term.

To understand this, though, one must look at the concept of potentiality in a different way from that which is usually considered. Aquinas typically requires the foetus' brain to have advanced enough to support higher thinking before the soul can be infused. There is no apparent reason, however, why a soul cannot reside in a creature with the capacity to develop the appropriate mental sophistication, according to which human persons and human animals may be defined as living beings with self-consciousness or the ability to become self-conscious. This protects both the embryo in the womb and the vegetative state patient, who may or may not be able to exercise his self-conscious at this time, from being considered less than or other than human. Aquinas may want to say, in the case of the vegetative state patient, that the person has already gone on into the afterlife, leaving behind a non-human living animal. But this is problematic. There was no provision to sustain the lives of such people in Aquinas' day, but now they are the subjects of many an ethical discussion on whether life-support should be discontinued or otherwise. Furthermore, we often hear of cases when such patients have regained consciousness and fully recovered. It seems very strange to say that in these cases, the souls return to their bodies having departed them, and even more so to suggest that the non-human living being has just ceased to exist. Better then to regard the persistent vegetative state patient as fully human on the basis that he still has the potential to exercise his rational faculties.

In terms of potentiality, then, we are interested in second-order potential rather than first-order. One might have the potential to speak French by having some knowledge of the language, such that, should the need arise, he could exercise this potentiality. If however, he does not know any French, but has the potential to learn it, we might say he has the potential for the potential to speak French. Likewise, assuming natural development, the human embryo has the potential to develop the tools for higher order thinking, but it is not until a certain amount of brain development has occurred that this potential can be actualised. The human soul, therefore, requires only that development will occur to fulfil its potentiality in order to be infused into what is now a living human embryo.

Closing remarks

This attempt to rework Aquinas' account of embryogenesis should not be dismissed too hastily. In order to

match up with modern knowledge of medicine, it is necessary for human life to begin from the moment when there is a living organism with human DNA, and not to cease until the last sign of life. Furthermore, the Thomistic framework requires that persons are defined according to the intellectual nature, and the souls of living beings determine their species. Nothing can therefore have a human soul that is not a human being. Similarly, nothing can be a human being and not have a human soul. This is the hylomorphic picture.

With regard to scholastic animalism as a metaphysical theory about the nature of human beings, we find not only that it aligns itself with common sense – we are persons, and persons are (generally) human, which is to belong to a particular species of the animal kingdom – but also takes the philosophically cogent view that both contemporary animalism and personalism have something to offer, while maintaining that neither alone is sufficient to explain the essence of humanity.

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Introduction

I. A Question of Relation

i. Persons and Animals

Am I a human being? Am I a person? Currently, it seems undeniable that I am both, but whether I am necessarily or even permanently either of these is a more difficult question. I might then ask whether I am an animal, a human animal, under one interpretation of the term ‘human being’. If I am both a human animal and a human person, there leaves it open to question whether all human animals are necessarily or even permanently human persons (and vice versa), or indeed whether any human animals are ever human persons (and vice versa). Our interest here, then, is with four concepts – animality, personhood, human animality, and human personhood – and how they are related. Animality is defined as the property of being an animal. There might be some debate as to the level of animality of certain creatures that seem more plant than animal, for example, sea anemone and sponges, but the term is rightly applied to those of the kingdom animalia, of which these are included, as well as more sophisticated animals such as cats, chimpanzees and human beings.

Next, the property of personhood is generally assigned to those creatures that can rightly be said to be alive and have certain psychological properties, such as self-consciousness, will and rationality. Most uncontroversially, this is just human beings, but personhood has also been applied to higher-order creatures such as apes and dolphins. Furthermore, the concept can also apply to what we might term ‘non-animal persons’, say angels, deities, souls etc., and some might even apply it to a particularly advanced robot, if one could ever exist. The question that concerns us here, though, is to do with the intensions of animality and personhood. In the case of human beings, it is not clear that such intensions could be disjoint, but if we consider a more basic animal, for example, an earthworm, no-one would want to say such a creature could be a person, though clearly it belongs to the animal kingdom. The properties of animality and personhood, therefore, clearly have disjoint intensions, even if one living creature could be said to have both. That is to say, either one could be assigned without the other.

Now, we come to the latter two properties, namely human animality and human personhood. Human animality I take to be the property of belonging to the species *Homo sapiens* (Latin: ‘wise man’) of the animal kingdom, and the adjective ‘human’ to be related to human animality, for example, a human body, a human hand etc. A human animal is therefore an animal, a living organism, that is, human, as opposed to being feline, simian (controversially including humans) and so on. Human personhood, then, could only apply to such beings as have human animality, to the conclusion that a human person is merely a person that is human. For the purposes of this thesis, I will be defining ‘human person’ thus, in order to avoid any possibility of there existing such a being that may be termed ‘human animal’, but is something other than a

human person, as is often said regarding the incarnation of Jesus Christ.¹ I therefore additionally assume ‘human animal’ only to apply to earthly beings and not divine, whose nature is purely human.

The controversial issue, then, concerns the intensions of human animality and human personhood. It is no more obvious that they are disjoint than that they pick out the same property. It is therefore the main concern of this thesis to decide how, if at all, these properties are related. It is up for debate whether I, Gill, am in the extension of either human animal or human person, or both, and if so, whether I am always in this extension of human animal/person or only at certain points of existence.

For many philosophers, however, the criteria for something to be a human person are such that both the unborn child and the persistent vegetative state patient have little or no claim to this description. For example, Peter Singer (2011) defines a person as a rational, self-conscious being (p. 101). Such a definition could perhaps apply to certain non-human animals, and though he does not make a distinction between non-human and human persons, we can extrapolate to define a human person as a rational, self-conscious human being. For Singer, this automatically rules out the unborn child and the severely mentally handicapped. Similarly, Olson (2003) considers personhood to be dependent on certain special mental qualities, such as rationality, intelligence, self-consciousness, moral responsibility and free will (p. 318). Unlike Singer, for him, the latter two properties seem to rule out non-human animals, but neither does he assume that all human beings are at all times human persons. Alternatively, one might define a human person as one having such mental qualities potentially rather than actually, for example, the late antique philosopher and theologian Boethius, who defined a person as “an individual substance of a rational nature”, which included God as Trinity, angels and souls, but not any sort of non-human animal. For Boethius, therefore, the unborn child and the severely mentally handicapped are secured in their personhood by virtue of having a rational nature; nothing is a human being and not a person, though ‘person’ is not limited to human beings.

Nonetheless, our real concern is not so much with those beings considered to be persons but who are not human, but with those beings, if there are any, that are human, but who may not be considered persons, that is, the disjoint intensions of human persons and human animals. The former discussion may be touched upon later on, but it is not the primary focus. Instead, we come to a question of identity between human animals² and human persons. For the two to be numerically identical, there can be no time when something can exist as a human animal and not as a human person and vice versa. This is not to say that the criteria for being a human animal and human person need to be the same though. Such identity may not be necessary even if nothing does exist that is not both a human animal and a human person. This does not mean nothing *could*

¹ It is a matter of orthodoxy in Catholic doctrine that Jesus is not a human person, as the term should only be applied to a human being with both an earthly biological mother and father. Instead, he is regarded a divine person with a shared divine and human nature. There has been much debate of this matter over the centuries, but it is too select an instance for us to be concerned with here.

² Also called ‘rational animals’, see Toner (2011)

exist as a human animal and not a human person; such a relation may only be a contingent fact. If, however, the identity relation were one of necessity, then it could be the case that one is a human person because one is a human animal; that is to say, necessarily, every member of the species *Homo sapiens*, that is, every human animal, is identical to some human person. This final view is the one I shall be motivating.

ii. *Scholastic Animalism, Contemporary Animalism and Contemporary Personalism*

The relation between human animality and human personhood, then, may be one of mutual separability, mutual inseparability, or of one-way separability. Or, to put it another way, the properties may be incompatible, equivalent or neither, where only one is a permanent and essential property of human beings [by which I mean 'us']. The former is a view held by *contemporary personalists* (the majority of which are also known as neo-Lockeans), who argue that human animality and human personhood are incompatible properties, such that nothing can have both of these properties, at least at any one time. This is because human persons have one sort of persistence conditions, and human animals have another. Contemporary personalists therefore hold to the following:

1.
 - a) we are essentially persons
 - b) to be essentially persons is to be essentially minded
 - c) therefore, we only survive if we have minds
 - d) but it is at least metaphysically possible for our minds to survive the death of our bodies, so the survival of our bodies is not necessary or sufficient for our survival
 - e) animals need bodies to survive, such that bodies are necessary and sufficient for survival
 - f) therefore, we are not animals; we only share some matter/a body with an animal

In conclusion, therefore, for the contemporary personalist, the properties of human animality and human personhood are separate and incompatible. For the *contemporary animalist*, on the other hand, a single being can be both a human person and a human animal simultaneously, though this is by no means necessary for its survival. The persistence conditions for human persons and human animals are therefore identical, where both properties apply, however the conditions for being a human animal are purely biological, whereas for a human person they are psychological, and so the former can exist without being an instance of the latter. As the view expressed by Olson suggests, human personhood is the result of certain mental properties, most notably, self-consciousness, will, rationality and moral reasoning, and so contemporary animalism allows a being to lose these properties and still survive, unlike personalism, where the death of my personhood is the death of me. Contemporary animalists therefore express the following:

2.
 - a) we are essentially animals
 - b) to be essentially animals is to have a body
 - c) therefore, we only survive if our bodies do

- d) but it is possible for our bodies to transcend our minds, so we can exist without being persons
- e) however, personhood requires animality, so we can only be persons if we are animals
- f) so, we are not essentially persons, though we actually may be persons

Therefore, for the contemporary animalist, personhood and animality are not separate substantial kinds because personhood is not a substantial kind at all. Although apparently opposite positions, the idea of personhood as an account regarding particular mentally recurrent properties is one that both contemporary personalists and contemporary animalists agree upon. However, it is precisely this concept of personhood that is denied by the third view I wish to expound: *scholastic animalism*. This final theory regarding the relation between human animals and human persons is most notably endorsed by St Thomas Aquinas, though by no means exclusively. We also see elements of it in the writing of Boethius, whom Aquinas directly references, and Aristotle, one of his greatest influences. Nonetheless, the theory, which highlights the mutual inseparability of human animality and human personhood, probably could just as easily be called scholastic personalism as animalism. It seems that the latter is favourable, however, for the property of animality precedes personhood in the embryo, for Aquinas, in such a way that the being is believed to have non-human animality before soul fusion, which in turn causes its human animality and therefore personhood. For this reason, Aquinas takes issue with both contemporary personalists, who deny that my body's survival is essential for my survival, and contemporary animalists, who deny that my mind's survival is essential for my survival. The scholastic animalist, therefore, believes that:

3.

- a) we are essentially both persons and animals
- b) to be essentially both persons and animals is to have a human body, which is a material body informed by a rational intellectual soul
- c) therefore, we only survive if our bodies do, which is both necessary and sufficient for our survival
- d) we also only survive if our minds do, because we are minded essentially

Scholastic animalism holds that human animality and human personhood are equivalent properties, such that human animals and human persons have the same persistence conditions, namely the survival of one's body, and so anything that is a human animal is also a human person and vice versa. It is perhaps up for debate at what point the fertilised human embryo becomes³ a living human animal, but it is at that same point that the human embryo/foetus becomes a human person. In the same way, at the point of death, anything regarded as merely the remains of a human animal, is also the remains of a human person. Furthermore, if such a being existed in the afterlife as a human animal, say through bodily resurrection, then its human personhood would also exist.

³ I use this term loosely, for Aquinas' account of embryogenesis does not allow the same being to become anything. Instead, it ceases to exist and is replaced by the more sophisticated being.

iii. *The Current Debate*

The above position seems to sit halfway between contemporary animalism and Lockeanism, with regard to the kinds of beings we are. For the contemporary animalist, such as van Inwagen or Olson, the kind of beings we are is based upon our nature and persistence conditions as purely biological. For the Lockean, including Locke himself, as well as those calling themselves neo-Lockeans and personalists, our nature and persistence conditions are entirely psychological. The middle position, therefore, requires that our nature and persistence conditions depend upon both biological and psychological properties. This position is not new, dating back to Aristotle (for whom we are essentially rational animals), but as with contemporary animalism, is not as popular now as it once was. I anticipate that the reason for this may be based on a misunderstanding e.g. in Rudder Baker, of what is required for the dignity of human beings as persons, given that debates about personal identity rarely come to the conclusion that anything more than the continuation of my psychological life is necessary for my persistence.

The problem, then, is not so much with contemporary animalism or Lockeanism, but with anti-animalism – the view that we are not animals – and with anti-Lockeanism or anti-personalism – the view that we are not essentially persons. Animalism, though, is perfectly compatible with personalism. Wiggins, for example, though he accepts the biological view that human beings are (in an identity-expressing sense) animals, wishes to embrace a neo-Lockean account of human beings as persons⁴. For this reason, many on both sides of the animalist/neo-Lockean debate mistake his position as one or the other. Ontologically-speaking, Wiggins sees us as both fundamentally human animals and persons, but in terms of personal identity, he seems to allow the transplanting of a working brain from one living body to another, to result in the movement of the whole person, and thereby the human being, while also arguing that this does not seem to be enough; in the famous thought experiment⁵, Brown's brain and personhood in Robinson's body, the person now referred to as Brownson, is not really Brown the human being. Neither is he really Robinson. Like Locke, one might be tempted to say that it is possible to be the same person without being the same man.

But is this right? It is easy to see why one might go this way, but even most animalists are open to the possibility of a human being existing as just a brain, still an animal but a heavily-mutilated one.⁶ Brown is therefore reduced to the dimensions of his brain, to be connected up with a different body to animate. The question we ought to be asking ourselves though is that of why, as animalists, we should be identifying the human being with its brain, when its body has the DNA of another man. Would we do the same for other animals? If I were to perform a brain swap on two cats or even mice, would this give the same result? Is the cat I now have the one who lost a leg in a car accident, or the one who just had kittens? It is unclear which

⁴ Wiggins (1980)

⁵ Shoemaker (1963)

⁶ Such as van Inwagen and Olson

way we would want to go. Likewise, the majority of Brownson has Robinson's DNA. It is assumed that Brown and Robinson have very similar bodies, but what if they did not? Biologically, brains like other organs would be rejected by the host body if not compatible, but as a matter of metaphysical possibility, it is hard to see why Brown's brain might not accidentally end up in Mrs Robinson's body, or even the body of Mrs Robinson's cat. In cases such as these, it seems hard to state outright that the host's body is completely irrelevant to the persistence of Brown the human being. Perhaps there is a sense in which two different animals are now occupying the same body.

In order to make sense of this, one either needs to divorce the concept 'human' from 'human being' and 'human person', a direct attack on animalism, as well as science in general, or else choose to define 'animal' in such a way that even human beings reduced to brains – or even parts of brains - are still animals. Locke offers the following explanation:

*An animal is a living organised body; and consequently the same animal, as we have observed, is the same continued life communicated to different particles of matter as they happen successively to be united to that organised living body.*⁷

The most important aspect of being an animal, therefore, is that of having the same continued life. Particles of matter in association with that life can change and be lost. Van Inwagen, who references Locke on this matter⁸, sees the definition of an animal still applying to the brain of that animal, as long as its life continues. Such a definition does seem to hold some contention with biology, which defines an animal (postnatal) according to its multicellular body and specialised sense organs, but it is up for debate whether one could regard a brain as a whole person any more than as a whole animal. Both human animals and human persons [by which I mean 'us'] seem to require sense perception and therefore sense organs of some kind for the kind of personhood⁹ with psychological persistence conditions. Even if one closes his eyes, he still has awareness of his own being via his senses, but a separated brain may not even have the sense of touch, let alone the capacity for sight, hearing, smell or taste. Not until Brown's brain is sited in Robinson's body, then, is he more than a mutilated human being, both person and animal, which calls into the question the matter of whether your body is actually necessary for your persistence after all. If not, one might very well ask whether your body is any more necessary for your persistence as an animal than as a person.

Modern medicine though seems to suggest it might be more necessary than we think. There is a mysterious phenomenon in the recent medical research of cellular memory concerning the possibility that aspects of one's personality are stored in organs other than the brain, particularly the heart.¹⁰ A number of documented

⁷ Locke, John (1624), *Essay II*, 27:8

⁸ van Inwagen, Peter (1997), ch 14

⁹ If personhood is based on species or natural kind, then one cannot lose his personhood without ceasing to exist.

¹⁰ Buttigieg, J. and Duffy, C. (2017)

cases have revealed patients exhibiting unusual personality traits or skills and having memories later associated with the donor. If, then, Brown's brain is transferred to Robinson's body, not only is it possible that the person Brown will lose memories and skills, and even undergo something of a change of personality, but he may also experience something of Robinson's personhood in addition. Perhaps this is not enough to challenge the principle that Brown the human being still exists, but it does raise the issue of whether being the same person is enough for Brown still to be Brown.

The topic of brain transplants and identity according to proponents of animalism and personalism is taken up in detail by McMahan (2001), but what is less popular in the literature, and outright rejected by most, is the belief that the persistence conditions of human beings is just as much about belonging to a particular biological species or natural kind as having the same continued consciousness. On this view, Brownson is either both the same human animal and the same human person as Brown, or he is neither. Most animalists and personalists, if given the choice, want to say the former, given that it seems even less plausible that Brownson could be a completely new person appearing out of nowhere, but there are reasons why one might want to go the other way.

This is discussed by Toner (2011), whose version of animalism (hylomorphic¹¹ animalism) bases a human being's persistence on his remaining the same substance, belonging to a natural kind, whose members are both persons and animals. On this interpretation, where a living human body is, that human being must be also. If, then, Brown's brain or perhaps just his cerebrum is removed and placed in Robinson's head, Brown remains where the rest of his body is, with little or no consciousness. As Toner explains, the movement of persons is based on an intuition most want to accept, but this does not make it right. In fact, in real-life cases, where a person's cerebrum is destroyed through a stroke, he is left in a persistent vegetative state (hereafter PVS), with a similar psychology to Brown in the cerebrum removal case, but perfectly alive. Given that PVS patients can and do fully recover, it is harder to say that the patient has ceased to exist during this time. Better, then, to consider him still there. For Toner, the cerebrum transplant case would then result in Brown and Robinson being exactly where they were, but now with different psychology, assuming they regain consciousness. The full brain swap case is more tricky, given that consciousness definitely would be interrupted, but in terms of natural kinds, Brown the human being is where his body is. The hylomorphic animalist, with no particular commitment to consciousness in relation to persistence, must allow the brain swap to result in a Brown with a different brain, and all the psychological changes that come with it. I accept that this is now somewhat counterintuitive, even if it is in line with science and our other commitments, but it is not obviously false.

Whichever way the animalist wants to go, therefore, his responses are no less reasonable than the personalist in these cases. In response to McMahan, then, the main goal of this thesis is to refute anti-animalism, which not only denies that we are (in the identity-expressing sense) permanently and essentially animals, but also

¹¹ Also 'hylomorphic', but this is Toner's preferred spelling

that we are currently identical to an animal. The latter view is not compatible with science. In order to put forward personalism though, it is also necessary to refute anti-personalism. Nonetheless, in terms of personal identity, the default position is currently in favour of psychological continuity and connectedness. Therefore, it is rather animalism that must be defended.

Persistence of a human being, even through something as dramatic as a brain or cerebrum transplant, can be accounted for just as easily by animalists and personalists, as we have seen. However, the question ‘when did I begin?’ can only be dated back to the point of my having occurrent mental properties for most personalists¹², even though each of us seems to exist as a biological animal in the womb before this. Matters such as these concern not only personal or psychological persistence and survival, then, but biological life and survival, the latter of which seems to precede the former. This is the Foetus Problem. Typically, in the literature, animalist responses to the Foetus Problem undermine any account of human beings as necessarily persons, on the basis that personhood cannot exist from the first moment a human being does. Our interests, therefore, are with putting forward a case for the compatibility of animalism and personalism. For this, we return to something like hylemorphic animalism. As the name suggests, this rests on an Aristotelian-Thomistic metaphysics, according to which all material substances are composed of form and matter, and in the case of human persons, soul and body. Various contemporary accounts of hylomorphism are discussed in relation to the ontology of substances, such as those of Fine and Koslicki, but fewer also provide answers to personal identity questions. Toner (2011) and Hershenov (2011) in particular both put forward hylomorphism as an answer to the animalism-personalism debate. For Hershenov, animalism’s benefit over personalism is its avoidance of the too-many-minds problem, which is allegedly borne out of any view that sees the human animal and the human person as two separate entities in some way conjoined but with different persistence conditions. However, in accordance with his understanding of hylomorphism, he seems to allow the movement of the intellective soul and therefore the person in the brain transplant case, while also allowing an animal to remain behind in a PVS, on the basis that the soul will always want to realise its highest powers. This though, surely is open to the same charges as the transplant case where Brown moves with his brain to accommodate Robinson’s body, which becomes part of Brown the human being, while maintaining the DNA etc. of Robinson.

Toner’s hylemorphic animalism seems to be more successful. On his view, the removal of the cerebrum will leave behind the person, that is, the human animal, as a cerebrumless living being. You, therefore, are the PVS patient in the bed, in the same way that you would be the stroke victim, living with a destroyed cerebrum. This is reasonable as a way to explain the status of the PVS patient, who eventually recovers, but it does put pressure on the idea that we are essentially and permanently humans. For as long as it lives, the animal in the bed is you, but, for Toner, without powers of rationality, it is neither a human animal nor a person. Toner’s hylemorphic animalism, therefore, argues along with scholastic animalism that every human person is identical to a human animal, but it denies that one who is currently a human being can continue to

¹² That is, those who subscribe to Lockeanism

exist as something other than a human animal/person. While the former states that human animals are permanently and essentially human persons, the latter, which is Aquinas' view, requires more: *I* am permanently and essentially a human animal and a human person. For Toner, the PVS patient in the bed is not a person. Neither is he a human animal. Instead, he is reduced to a non-human animal or animaloid(?), the reverse of the process that moves an animal-like embryo to a human-like foetus.

This thesis will therefore put forward the more demanding position, in line with modern biology, that the DNA of a PVS patient determines that, though he is mentally non-continuous with a human animal, he is nevertheless definitely a member of the human species. I accept that it may take a reworking of Aquinas' position in order to reach this conclusion, for it is generally believed that he denies that human animals and therefore persons can exist before having acquired a mind, but at the time of writing, the concept of species in terms of DNA was not open to him. This, therefore, may have altered his position. Furthermore, with our own knowledge of science today, I am not convinced it is really open to us to dismiss it either.

II. Scholastic Animalism

i. The Work of Aquinas

This second section will now focus on the background behind the position that will be argued for in this thesis. For St Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), human nature is an important part of his *Summa Theologiae* (hereafter *ST*), comprising twenty-seven questions as a Treatise on Man, which covers a number of different issues relating to what man, that is a human being, is and his purpose and nature. There is of course too much here to consider in the space available, so I shall be focusing on the issues that relate directly to the case for scholastic animalism, starting with an account of the metaphysical constitution of human beings, grounded in a hylomorphic metaphysical view of the soul and body.

As a Christian philosopher, Aquinas wrote on a number of issues relevant both to modern discussions in philosophy and in theology. However, while most of the *ST* follows from various aspects of Christian doctrine, the topics themselves are largely philosophical in nature, such as, metaphysics of substance, philosophy of mind and perception, and philosophy of religion, as will concern us here. Furthermore, a broadly philosophical study of Aquinas on human nature will discuss the themes in these theological texts rather than those regarded as philosophy because he, like many other mediaeval philosophers, considered himself a theologian first and a philosopher second. As Anthony Kenny (1993) explains, this should indicate to us that there will be more insight into the philosophical accounts of human nature in *ST*, for example, than any commentaries on Aristotle's *De Anima* or *Metaphysics* (p. 20).

It has also been suggested, notably by Robert Pasnau (2002), that what was regarded as theology at the time Aquinas was writing, has more in common with modern philosophy than does mediaeval philosophy, and that the areas we now call philosophy were taught as aspects of theology, namely, ethics, mind, knowledge

and metaphysics (p. 11-12). We are therefore perhaps more likely to gain an insight into Aquinas' thought on human nature from his *ST* than his *Summa Contra Gentiles* (hereafter, *SCG*), the latter of which was written as a work of philosophy, and precedes the *ST*. Nonetheless, aspects of a number of texts will be important to us in this study, the other notable ones being his commentaries on Aristotle's *De Anima* and *Metaphysics*, and Boethius' *De Trinitate*, and certain writings by St Augustine of Hippo (354-430) and St Paul the Apostle (5-67), who particularly influenced him. As a Christian believer and an Aristotelian, therefore, Aquinas intends to present an account of human nature compatible both with Christian doctrine about man and his relationship with God, and with his understanding of Aristotle, as discussed in his commentaries on *De Anima* and the *Metaphysics*.

ii. *A Question of Human Nature*

So, what is a human animal? A 'human being' (also human animal in this sense) is defined in the dictionary as "a man, woman, or child of the species *Homo sapiens*, distinguished from other animals by superior mental development, power of articulated speech, and upright stance". The term 'human' comes originally from the Latin *humanus*, from *homo*, meaning 'man'. According to Ware (1987), these two terms are tied etymologically to the word for the earth, *humus*, which distinguishes the earth-dwelling man from the heavenly beings. Furthermore, in the Greek roots, *anthropos*, from which we get 'anthropology' and related words, is linked to *anathrein*, which means 'to look up' (p. 202), as mirrored in the dictionary definition, where humans are described as animals of an upright stance, distinguishing them from all apes (which naturally walk on all fours), though the Latin word *homo* was previously used to refer to chimpanzees too.

For Aquinas, the answer to what it is to be human lies in the concept of the human soul, which is the first principle of life. This understanding is Aristotelian, where all living things, not just human animals, are said to be so by virtue of a soul, from the Latin *anima*, which has a number of different faculties according to its purpose. Plants, for example, have fewer faculties of soul than non-human animals, which differ only from human animals in that they have no intellectual capacities. This intellect, or mind, is said to distinguish man from other corporeal living things, by marking him out as rational.

III. The History of the Philosophical Concept 'Soul': Key Ideas from the Pre-Socratics to the Mediaevals

i. *Accounts of Soul*

In Aquinas' account of human nature, part of what it is to be human is to have a certain type of soul. We therefore cannot understand his account of human animality and personhood without first understanding the concept of soul. In service of this, it is useful to say something about the history of the term before his time. This will be limited to the key issues, however, as there is no time to give a full account, and neither is it necessary to understand the view I intend to put forward.

While the concept of soul is something that has been studied over a vast period of time, the great discrepancy existing over terms may result in there being little or no overlap at all between what was understood by the ancient thinkers and now, and even what was understood at the time of Aquinas. The Greek word *psukhé*, for example, can mean ‘soul’, ‘breath’, ‘mind’ or ‘life’, and yet this ‘mind’ does not seem to signify the same as meant by modern day psychologists. In neuropsychology, for instance, the study of mind is really the study of the workings of the brain. It does seem though that the term ‘mind’ is more neutral with respect to substantial kind than the term ‘soul’ is. Perhaps this is why speak of souls is not something considered to be appropriate in science and philosophy today. Most academics in these fields regard it as a concept relevant only to theology and religion, as a sort of immaterial entity, or even just as a manner of speaking. However, it is important to note that ‘mind’ and ‘soul’ are often both translated from the same word: *anima/animae*, so it perhaps should not be the case that either one is more readily regarded as neutral with respect materiality than the other. It should also be noted that *anima* is a term not just attributed to human beings, but sometimes also to other animals and to plants, though this study concerns only human beings, so I will not focus on these matters.

ii. *Pre-Socratic: Soul as Life-Principle*

We can gain some insight into general Pre-Socratic (though not necessarily philosophical) ideas about the soul, then, from texts such as Homeric poetry. It is written in *The Iliad* (circa eighth century BC): “I’ve won nothing for all I’ve suffered, battling on, pain in my heart, with my life always under threat” (Achilles, Book IX, 322). The key word here is ‘life’, which is one translation of the Greek word, *ψυχή* (transliteration, *psukhé*) though the first definition is ‘breath’ or ‘soul’ (*Strong’s Concordance*, 5590). Here, then, the human soul seems to have a first principle of life: that which distinguishes the animate from the inanimate. To be ensouled is simply to be alive. However, it is not the case that the soul has any sort of activity other than this, contrary to latter theories of soul. The cognitive faculties, as we now understand them, are instead tied to the concept of *nous*, the mind or intellect, though then believed to be located in the chest. Both *psukhé* and *nous* are almost exclusively applied to human animals and other beings of a higher order.

Then, at death, a fragment of the soul (sometimes called the free-soul) goes into the underworld, and the body is parted from it. This does not tell us anything particular about the nature of the soul - only that it is separable from the body - but this sort of soul does seem to be quite unlike substance: a fluttering thing that goes forth into the underworld, as a shadow of the human being that once existed. After bodily death, the human soul does not survive. Instead, a mere shadow of it remains, one with a very different ontological status (MacDonald, 2003, p. 21).

We next see in Heraclitus (circa 540-480 BC), that the soul is taken to be bodily, a corporeal thing composed of an unusually fine or rare kind of the matter, like air or fire.¹³ Unlike the body, though, the soul was believed to be limitless, generated out of other substance as with fire (Graham, IEP). This, however, seems to

¹³ *ibid*

have some rather strange implications. How can the soul be a body yet limitless? Even fire stretches over a particular area, and air can be contained in some way. The soul, though, seems to go beyond even the boundaries of the body it inhabits, leaving it a mystery as to what makes a soul the soul of a particular person. As merely a life-force, it perhaps needs no individuation, but in order to be affected by the body, as Heraclitus argues to be the case with an intoxicated person, there is a sense that individual souls are tied to individual human bodies. Yet seeing as it is similar to the body in substance, though finer and more mobile, there is no implication of a soul-body dualism, as is found in later thinkers. There does seem to be an implication though for some sort of body-soul separation at death, whether to everlasting glory, or destruction in the cosmic fire (McKirihaan, 1994, p. 146).

iii. *Platonic: Soul as Person*

Conversely, Plato (circa 428-348 BC), who was dissatisfied with Homer's idea of the underworld, makes a case for an immortal soul¹⁴, capable of being separated from the body and reincarnated. As with earlier thinkers, Plato's soul (as *psukhē*) distinguishes the living from the non-living. It is still to be understood more like the original conception of 'soul', then, than the more modern conception of 'mind'. However, for Plato, the soul does more than just animate the body. It is a higher order thing than the body, whose nature is different from the body in which it causes changes. Plato's account of soul and body, therefore, is a dualistic one. The soul can be separated from the body, where it dwells as a whole, rather than a fragment, among the Forms, which it desires more than anything else (*Phaedo*, 66b), and is reincarnated into a different body, leaving the original body to die without affecting it.

So what sort of a relationship does the soul have with the body? According to Goetz and Taliaferro (2011), Plato sees the soul as being the mover of the physical body, by first setting itself in motion (p. 13). It keeps to the same condition, unlike bodies, which are composite and whose components are constantly changing, being mereological non-composite and therefore having no parts. Here, we see the soul as more than just the animating spirit of the body. Further, Plato identifies the soul as the person himself, a substantial individual being (Goetz and Taliaferro, *ibid*). Here, he differs from Homer, who considered whatever went into the underworld to be a mere shadow of the person, and from his successor, Aristotle, for whom it appears, at least most of the time, that the composite of soul and body was to be identified with the subject 'I'. This dualistic account, therefore, is more like what we find in Descartes' *Meditations*, concerning the distinction between mind and body, though strictly-speaking, he uses the word *mens*, the Latin word for the Greek, *nous*, rather than *anima*, from *psukhē*, on the grounds that the term 'soul' is ambiguous.

iv. *Aristotelian: Soul as Form*

For Plato, the soul's relationship with the Forms is one of coexistence, but they remain separate entities. For Aristotle (384-322 BC), on the other hand, the soul is related to the Forms in the sense that it is the Forms it

¹⁴ An example of this can be found in *The Republic* as a conversation between Socrates and Glaucon.

knows. As mentioned above, the Aristotelian conception of soul is as a life-principle for living things, where faculties of soul differ between species. As a life-principle of an essentially living being, the soul is said to be the substantial form of the living body or a living being. I will address these complexities later. Briefly, received substantial form is what determines a thing's natural kind, that which answers the question: "what kind of thing is x ?" An example of this is the clay statue. The form of the statue is the particular shape it consists in. Statues are not essential statues, but clay arranged statue-wise. Its matter is the clay itself. The two together make up the clay statue and can be thought of as its different 'parts'. Truly, the soul as the form of the body does not have parts - it is indivisible, an incorporeal entity - but it does have differing faculties or powers. A human, for example, has nutritional, locomotive, perceptive and intellective faculties of soul. This final faculty, which only humans and higher beings have, is said to be the 'part' of the soul that is not the form of the body. This comes out of Aristotle's need to explain how the soul can receive the Form of an object. He then has to account for how the intellect can do this and have a form itself, thus we have the introduction of the agent/active and passive intellects. The agent or active intellect, which is immortal and immaterial, receives perceptions and depends on the passive intellect to deposit Forms into it, while the passive intellect, which is perishable and inseparable from the body, keeps the Forms it has received.

As with Plato, Aristotle seems to present us with something like dualism of intellect and body. In the latter's case, though, while there are passages in *De Anima* that appear to have dualistic import, one might ask questions about how worked-out and wholehearted the ideas are. Something of the nature of the soul, though, is less unclear. In each of the thinkers we have previously discussed, there is a notion of disembodied soul. Aristotle's soul, on the other hand, is not a primary substance that exists on its own and is distinct from the body. Instead, the primary substance is just the soul-body composite. It seems that the active intellect may survive the death of the body, though in what form is unclear, but it does not appear to be the case that Aristotle held to any sort of afterlife for human souls, unlike those before him.

v. *Augustinian: Soul as Self*

We now come to St Augustine, an important authority for St Thomas, whose account of soul is heavily influenced firstly by Platonist philosophy, and later Christian theology. Just like his successor, St Augustine undertook the task of reconciling biblical doctrine with philosophical ideas, in particular those of Plato, some of which he upheld in his own writing. Notably, though, were those beliefs about God and man that were considered to be orthodoxy: namely, that God created each soul prior to birth, that each person would be bodily resurrected after death for the afterlife, and that soul and body, which are spirit and dust, are separate and distinct, meeting a different fate once divided. With these points of orthodoxy, it is perhaps unsurprising that St Augustine favoured a version of substance dualism. The soul, which is a spirit, that is, not a body, is the principle of life. Each soul is individual to the human being to which it belongs, and as a spirit, it is incorporeal. As with Aristotle, St Augustine holds that different creatures have different faculties, and that human beings alone have intellect. However, he departs from Aristotle by considering the human self not to be synonymous with the human being, but with that being's soul. He therefore sees a human being as a soul

joined to a physical body (Goetz and Taliaferro, 2003, p. 33), that is, a rational substance consisting of soul and body (*De Trinitate*, XV.2.11).

So far, St Augustine's account of soul is comparable with Plato's, where he seems to regard himself as a soul that is adapted to the rule the body while living, but at death will depart from it, thus having itself a higher status than the material body. For St Augustine, the soul is then given a new heavenly body for all eternity¹⁵. Additionally, St Augustine's soul seems to have some quite different properties from Plato's. It is described as a special substance, and while it is considered to be separate and incorporeal, it does occupy space. Furthermore, although possessing no parts, it is said to be located in its entirety in whatever space it occupies. The soul is therefore unique in that it is simple with respect to substance but complex with respect to properties. As with Aristotle's soul, for St Augustine, the soul is properly said to have a number of powers or faculties, while being itself one substance. The relationship between body and soul, then, is such that there cannot be separation after mixing. With these thoughts, St Augustine provides an account of soul that is compatible with the significant passage in Genesis, regarding the creation of man from dust and spirit, and then again in Ecclesiastes, which speaks of the separation of the two substances. But, just like the Incarnation, he appreciates that he cannot fully explain the union of body and soul in man any more than the unity of the two natures in the person of Christ, a matter he does not consider at all problematic.

IV. The Modern Concept of Soul

As we can see, though, the concept of soul as the life principle of living things is a very common view throughout Greek, Early Antique and Mediaeval thought. It is, however, one that is lost by the time of Rene Descartes. As MacDonald (2003) writes, accounts of the nature and function of the human soul became less popular with the emergence of humanist writings in the Renaissance (p. 207), though the terms and ideas are found abundantly in Shakespeare, whose philosophy seems to stem from that of Pythagoras. For Descartes, then, the terms 'soul' and 'mind' are used interchangeably, and the original concept of the soul as life-principle is dismissed, on the grounds that a mechanical view of the human being renders it superfluous. He even goes on to suggest that the reason this view was so popular was simply because of the lack of understanding about the workings of the human body. His view of life, then, is perhaps an emergentist one, where life emerges when the parts of the human body are arranged in a particular way.

Given the huge influence Descartes had on the philosophy of human nature, it is perhaps unsurprising that the original Greek concept *psukhé* should have been discounted in later philosophy, to the point where the term 'soul' is not seen as relevant today. But is this really the case? I suggest otherwise. Furthermore, even if the word 'soul' is stigmatised as something with little application today, that is not to say that the concept itself shall meet the same fate.

¹⁵ As described by St Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4

Nonetheless, I do not think it likely that even the word ‘soul’ will go out of use entirely, if just for its place in everyday language. Firstly, the word is used numerous in the Bible to refer to man’s inner self or the person as a whole, as well as in other great literature. Secondly, it is a convention of language to refer to a person or human being as a soul, as in this familiar exchange:

A: Was there anyone there?

B: Not a soul.

No-one intends by this that there might have been some disembodied, immaterial substance floating around and there was not, but quite simply that no-one was there. The soul here then represents the self, or even the human being as a whole. Furthermore, despite the disappearance of the use of ‘soul’ in place of ‘life’ in Descartes and subsequent writings, we still hear the expression ‘SOS’, which most people understand to mean ‘Save Our Souls’. In this instance, ‘souls’ does not seem to refer to particular persons or human beings, but to the persons’ lives themselves, tying back to the Greek idea of the soul as life-principle, even if that conception is not alluded to by those who speak these words.

Finally, we see the word ‘soul’ used to represent feelings or individuality. If someone says, “he doesn’t have a soul”, they are not suggesting that he is dead, or even that he has lost his sense of self, but simply that he is unfeeling and lacking all human emotion. The adjective ‘soulless’ is also used in a similar way, except that one might additionally describe a place or an activity in this way, to indicate that it is empty and without character. One might even go as far as to call something ‘soul-destroying’, indicating its effect on a person too.

So, while the word ‘soul’ is very much a part of our everyday language, we can see that this usage has come about as the result of centuries of thought, especially in the philosophical and theological tradition, and further development in ancient, medieval, early modern and modern literature. We shall therefore look to Aquinas to consolidate these ideas, as we put forward scholastic animalism to explain the mysterious relation between our human animality and human personhood.

Chapter 1: Scholastic Animalism

§1.1 – Human Animalism and Human Personalism

i. A Thomistic Picture

The aim of this chapter is to explore in detail in what Aquinas' metaphysics and ideology consist, how they lead him to the view I have called *scholastic animalism*, and what this says about the necessary and sufficient conditions for human being-hood. The chapter is broken down into five sections. This first section will set up the debate by considering the main theories involved: animalism, human animalism, personalism, human personalism, and scholastic animalism, which holds to all the principles of the above. We shall also look at those positions denied by scholastic animalism, namely anti-human animalism and anti-human personalism, which are in turn typically rejected by human personalists and human animalists, respectively. The four points of scholastic animalism will then be considered in greater detail, according to Aquinas' specific metaphysics, which will be the focus of the second section. In particular, we will focus on hylomorphism of substance, which underlies his account of human nature, a view largely influenced by Aristotle. Having considered more basic substances as hylomorphic compounds of form and matter, in section three, we will be concerned with rational substances, such as human beings, and the nature of soul and body. The task of the penultimate section will then be to define what is meant by the soul as the form of the body, and how the faculties of soul, in particular the intellect, are responsible for a human being's necessary functions. This will then enable us to identify exactly what Aquinas' understands by the allegedly equivalent terms 'human person' and 'human animal', which are defined according to the hylomorphic picture of man as an intellectual soul informing a material body.

Finally, in order to really understand the Thomistic account of the nature of human persons as a metaphysical study, we need to consider these ideas in context. This last section will explore the existence of the human person from embryogenesis, in accordance with science and medicine, to the afterlife, where the concept of the persistence of a human person without a material body will be discussed.

ii. Varieties of Animalism and Personalism

In the introduction, we discussed what is meant by the properties of animality, human animality, personhood and human personhood, and the relations between them. We also considered the nature of human beings [by which I mean 'us'], in light of these thoughts. The position of animalism, then, is typically understood to be a thesis about the animality of human beings and human persons. Although it may be possible to believe that human beings and human persons are essentially and permanently animals, and not necessarily human animals, it is debatable whether this thesis really counts as animalism. Animalism, therefore, at the very least holds that we are human animals, and that given whatever is currently a human animal is permanently and essentially an animal, we are permanently and essentially animals. Nonetheless, there is also a stronger

claim, which is additionally endorsed by nearly all animalists, stating the following: necessarily, whatever is currently a human animal is permanently and essentially a human animal. Again, with regards to human beings, we are not only permanently and essentially animals, but *human* animals. I shall call this view human animalism for the sake of clarity.

On the other side, there are two forms of personalism. The term ‘personalism’ is used in different ways across a number of branches of philosophy. Therefore, what I shall mean by ‘personalism’ is the view that necessarily whatever is currently a human person is permanently and essentially a person. This claim belongs to what we might call weak personalism. There is also a stronger form of personalism, which I shall call human personalism. This is the view that whatever is currently a human person is permanently and essentially a human person. For reasons that we shall come to, although most philosophers who accept animalism accept human animalism, it is not the case that most philosophers who accept personalism accept human personalism. Such a distinction is therefore very important for this study, giving us four main theories about the nature of human beings.

However, though it has often been suggested, there is no logical reason why one cannot endorse any or all of these claims. It might seem *prima facie* that commitment to any kind of animalism amounts to a rejection of any kind of personalism, but the relation between animality and personhood does not require such a move. Instead, it might be thought that human beings are animals as much as persons, and human animals as much as human persons. This is the view of Thomas Aquinas, who holds to the claims of animalism, human animalism, personalism, and human personalism, in accordance with an Aristotelian conception of human beings. I have called this particular account *scholastic animalism*, to distinguish it from both animalism and human animalism, which both allow but do not require one to also accept the claims of human personalism. Scholastic animalists are necessarily both human animalists and human personalists.

On the other hand, many human animalists, and indeed animalists, are anti-personalists and anti-human personalists, and so they reject the view that human beings are permanently and essentially (human) persons, though they may currently be so. This is the view of Eric Olson. Additionally, many personalists are anti-animalist (and therefore anti-human animalist) in the sense that they hold that human persons ‘are’ (human) animals in some sense, but deny the relation to be one of identity. Such a view is found in the writings of both Lynne Rudder Baker, and Sydney Shoemaker, and will be discussed in chapter three.

Therefore, my goal is to make the best case for the above: we are human animals and human animals are essentially human animals, and we are human persons and human persons are essentially human persons. Since I am inclined to this view, I shall be defending what I have called scholastic animalism. Nonetheless, there are limits to how much of Aquinas’ theory of human personhood and animality I can endorse, especially relating to the coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be of human beings, some of which do not arise for more contemporary accounts of animalism. It is these issues that we shall be considering in this chapter.

iii. *Human Personhood and Human Animality*

Although contemporary philosophers often suppose that we have to choose between saying that we human beings are permanently and essentially persons, and that we are permanently and essentially animals, this view was not taken for granted in ancient and mediaeval thought, at least as far as we can see considering the various accounts of the nature of human beings, many of which did not really address the concept of personhood at all. Despite holding strongly to a thesis according to which human beings are both human persons and human animals, even Aquinas' *Treatise on Man* does not discuss human persons, but rather human beings (which he identifies with human animals). Instead, we find his thoughts on persons in the more theological writings on the Trinity (*Prima Pars*, 1a, Q27-32). In this chapter, therefore, we will be discussing a few texts, in order to elucidate a particularly influential form of scholastic animalism and Aquinas' arguments for the mutual inseparability of the properties of human animality and human personhood, in accordance with the four points outlined in the previous chapter:

- 1) we human beings are essentially both human persons and human animals. At no time can we be one and not the other.
- 2) to be essentially both human persons and human animals simultaneously is to have a human body, which implies a material body informed by a rational intellectual soul. Additionally, to be both human persons and human animals is to have a particular human body, that is, a particular material body informed by a particular rational intellectual soul.
- 3) therefore, (from 2) we survive only if our bodies do. Indeed, we survive if and only if our bodies do. For our bodies go on existing only as long as our intellectual souls go on informing them, and we go on existing as long as our intellectual souls inform our bodies.
- 4) we also only go on existing as long as our minds do, because, like all living beings, we go on existing only as long as our souls do, and our souls are 'intellectual' souls, i.e. minds

It is clear from the above that Aquinas' position is underpinned by his specific metaphysics of human nature, which, in turn, is explained by his interpretation of Aristotle's hylomorphic account of substance. We begin, therefore, with a synopsis of Thomistic metaphysics, and in particular, general hylomorphism.

§1.2 – The Metaphysical Basis for Scholastic Animalism

i. *Aristotelian-Thomistic Metaphysics*

This next section will provide the background for Aquinas' account of human persons, by first exploring his metaphysics of substances in general, and the role of form and matter in the composite. I will set out his discussion in the following three subsections. Firstly, I will state Aquinas' definitions of being and essence in the context of substance, both in the sense of the substance of a substance (*esse*), and first substances themselves, also called primary substances. Then, I will consider first substances as hylomorphic compounds

of form and matter, before discussing the nature of the composite substance, as *unum simpliciter*, not divisible into parts.

ii. *Substance as Being*

For Aquinas, ‘being’ is used in more than one sense, where in the broadest it is applied to anything that can be a subject of a proposition. As such, Aquinas’ account of being, found in *De Ente et Essentia* (hereafter *DEE*), applies both to things in reality, that is, substances and accidents, and to those things that perhaps do not actually exist, other than to be subjects of propositions, as was first discussed by Aristotle. In the first sense, then, being is divided into ten genera or categories. There is too much here to spend long on being and essence taken broadly, but of the ten categories, it is substance that is our focus. Aquinas defines substance as “a being of itself” (Commentary on *Metaphysics*, VII, 1251), where it is said of both essence and subject. The latter is the ‘what it is to be’, from the Greek *to ti en einai*: that which is said of something essentially. This excludes all that is predicated accidentally. The substance of something, or its essence, is therefore its definition. As such, ‘esse’ applies in the strictest and most proper sense to those things that have essences – that is, individual substances. This is substance according to the Aristotelian account of first or primary substance, such as ‘a man’ or ‘a cat’.¹⁶ However, ‘substance’ for Aquinas, as for Aristotle, is said in many ways. It is also applied to essence (also called ‘whatness’ and ‘quiddity’), which is the substance of a substance, not a substance itself, but said to be within a substance (*DEE*, cap 1).

iii. *General Hylomorphism*

For Aquinas, every first substance has an essence, and every essence is at least partly composed of substantial form. First substances, then, may be simple or composed. The former is really only said of God, who is uncreated, but the latter may be applied both to material and immaterial substances; that is, all created beings. Nonetheless, all and only material substances have composed essences or natures¹⁷, which in turn means that only material substances have within them form and matter. Though they are called composed substances, it is not merely form and matter which composes them. Instead, it is merely form and matter that make up the essence of the substance. Substances also have accidents predicated of them, which are not part of their essence – by definition – but nonetheless are ‘constituents’ or ‘components’ of them.

This is the Aristotelian theory of hylomorphism (from *hule*, ‘matter’ and *morphe*, ‘form’) to which Aquinas subscribes. The principle of hylomorphism states that each material being is characterised by its substantial form, the specifying principle of the substance. Form may be defined thus: “the principle or source of the characteristic qualities, activity and behaviour of a substance, [...] known to the extent in which it is manifested in these qualities and activities” (Copleston, 1955, p. 91). The term ‘matter’, on the other hand, applies both to substance actualised by form to have such and such properties, which include substantial

¹⁶ The reader should note that artefacts are not to be considered substances for Aquinas, though they seem to be for Aristotle.

¹⁷ Angels, though they are composed substances, do not have composed essences, and are therefore not composites of form and matter.

form, and to prime matter. For, it is really prime matter that is informed, for without form, no substance would exist at all. At one time, prime matter exists under one form, and at another, a different form, in that, by itself, it can never exist. Prime matter, then, is said to be numerically one across all created beings “because it is understood without all the dispositions which would cause it to differ numerically” (*De Principiis Naturae*, 16, hereafter, *DPN*). Nonetheless, in the first instance it is matter that gives individuality to form, and so prime matter can be conceived of with particular identities, especially concerning its role in creation (*ST I*, 39.1 ad. 3). Conversely, form is the cause of the individuation of individual substances; that is, each substance exists in and of itself because of its form.

Given that form is the specifying principle of matter, matter is said to be in potency until it receives its form, whereupon it is said to be in its first state of actuality (Commentary on *Metaphysics*, Book Theta, 8, 1860 (788)). Matter existing in a potential state, then, is prime matter. Aquinas explains this idea as follows:

But in itself (per se) [prime matter] can never exist, because given that by its nature it has no form, it has no actual existence, since actual existence comes only through form, whereas it is solely in potentiality (DPN 2.112-18).

We might then think of prime matter as a proper part of a complete substance.

iv. *The Nature of the Composite*

Nonetheless, although each material substance is a compound of form and matter (and accidents), it is still actually one, inseparable into its ‘parts’ without the destruction of the substance, except in the case of death for certain living substances. This is particularly important for soul-body hylomorphism, as we will discuss in the next section. Generally speaking, though, material substances of this kind are only fully separable by abstraction. That is to say, they cannot be separated out except by the power of the mind. By this, we do not mean that form and matter are figments of our imagination though; instead they are grounded in the substances themselves (Scaltsas, 1994, p. 99).

This, at least, is how Pasnau (2002, 2018) understands Aquinas on material inanimate¹⁸ substances: not as a metaphysical dualist about matter and form, potentiality and actuality, but as a proponent of reductive hylomorphism (p. 44)¹⁹. To be a metaphysical dualist about form and matter would be to view a material substance as one thing with two parts (one material, one formal) that can be separated from each other. Aquinas rejects such a division: “Matter [...] is never stripped of form and privation [...]” (*DPN* 2.112). There is instead a formal and a material explanation for the existence of substances. Form and matter, then, play an explanatory role in Aquinas’ general metaphysics of substance as conceptually distinct but not

¹⁸ This is important, for the hylomorphic relation between form and matter (soul and body) in living beings seems to be more than just conceptual. More on this later.

¹⁹ Pasnau, Robert (2002)

actually distinct elements. This is very much the view that Aristotle states outright, and Aquinas seems to support in his commentaries and elsewhere. One such example is found in *DEE*, where Aquinas explains that in material substances, the result of substantial form and matter is something *essentially* one, given that the conjunction of form and matter results in a nature that belongs in the predicament (category) of substance. This is necessary, for concrete names of substances that signify the composite are said properly to be in a genus as species. Conversely, form and matter are only in a category by reduction. That is, there is no category of being as form or matter, only the substance they compose (109).

However, this is not the only interpretation of Aquinas. Instead, some scholars²⁰ see him as appearing to hold two different views about the unity of form and matter in the composite substance, denying that his commentaries on Aristotle's theory of material substance reflect his own views. As a result, hylomorphism is regarded as a form of metaphysical dualism, whereby even in unity, material substances are actually (rather than conceptually) composed of form and matter, which have existence in their own right. Furthermore, these views are then extrapolated to living substances, composed of soul and body, resulting in the belief that Aquinas is a kind of substance dualist. This is a difficult matter and will be discussed in the next few sections.

The above account, writes Pasnau, should be quickly rejected. Aquinas dismisses any view of corporeal substances as one part matter and one part form, on the grounds that actuality is the only fundamental reality (*ibid*), and so matter can never be a thing in its own right. It is in this sense that his account differs both from substance dualism and ancient naturalism.²¹ As Pasnau points out, this is not a popular interpretation of Aquinas' ontology, and yet it is very difficult to read these passages in another way without creating further problems. However, in order to explain why this interpretation seems to be the right one, we must look further at the concepts of actuality and potentiality.

Firstly, the difference between actuality and potentiality is the difference between the ways things are actual and the way things are possible. The created world is of one kind, that is, finitely actual, while God is infinitely actual in time and space. As such, material and immaterial entities are not of different kinds. For Aquinas, the immaterial soul may just as easily be joined to the body as any other kind of actuality. There is, however, a distinction between material and immaterial substances. This is with regard to prime matter. The actualisation of prime matter by form creates a body, a material substance. Immaterial substances, on the other hand, do not inform prime matter. Angels, for example, have actualised natures, such that they are substances, but they are not bodies.

²⁰ Most notably, Eleonore Stump, Edward Feser, and William Hasker

²¹ These thinkers did not distinguish between potentiality and actuality, holding that only matter is a substance. They saw forms as existing only as something added onto prime matter.

Additionally, although material substances are said to be composites of prime matter and substantial form, the substances themselves are the things created, and not the elements. In what sense, then, do they exist? This, as Pasnau²² explains, with reference to a number of texts, is the difference between Aquinas' ideology and his ontology. It is the latter that interests us, but we cannot discuss one without discussing the other. In terms of ontology, then, there is only one mode of being, and substances are the only things that truly exist. Aquinas writes:

Forms and accidents, and other things of this sort, are called beings (entia) not because they themselves are, but because through them, something else is [...] An accident is more properly said to be of a being than a being [...] they ought to be called concreated rather than created. The properly created things, then, are subsistent things (ST I. 45.4c).

With regards to creation, Aquinas states that God only creates substances, and as such effectively 'brings to being' forms and accidents. For forms and accidents to exist, therefore, is just for a substance to exist in such and such a way. For example, when God created a cat, he also created the substantial form 'catness' and the accidents applicable to this particular cat, such as its colour, size, shape etc. We might then ask what it is for the substantial form to specify the subject if its existence does not precede the substance's. Again, this seems to be part of Aquinas' ideology, as a way of explaining the properties of the substance. Substantial forms (in general)²³ are not entities with their own causal agency. On the other hand, for accidental forms, it is quite clear that they are not entities. Pasnau, for example, gives the instance of his increased pallor upon spending a winter inside with his books. We might say that he is now very pale, but not that there is a thing 'paleness' that has come into existence.

Nonetheless, there is still one problem that will exist either way. This concerns the human soul, a subsistent substantial form. It is heavily debated whether, for Aquinas, the soul actually is a substance, at least prior to life after death, but even so, the notion of a subsistent form does not tie in very well with an ontology that only includes true substances.

I, therefore, conclude this section with some final thoughts on the implications this metaphysics will have for our understanding of living substances, with regard to what it means for a substance to be essentially one. The notion of being *unum simpliciter* is essential to understanding material substances, and stands in direct contrast to *unum secundum quid*, where a substance is said to be one in some respect. To be the former requires that a being is not an assemblage of parts joined together, even in some functional order. Importantly, this also includes cause and effect in that, if form and matter, and by extension soul and body, were only causally connected, a substance/living being would not be *unum simpliciter*. Instead, the

²² Pasnau, Robert (2018)

²³ The human substantial form, the soul, is likely to be an exception to this rule, given its subsistence and incorruptibility.

unification of form and matter must be reductive. If not, Aquinas argues, Socrates, as is his example, would not be in any species or genus, and could not have any action attributed to him, for actions only belong to beings (*De Unitate Intellectus*, 3.148-55). Not only, then, must the concept of *unum simpliciter*, and so reductive hylomorphism apply to material substances in general, but also to living beings, such as human beings, whereby the substantial form will both make a human being what it is, and (assuming living beings are essentially living) cause it to be alive. This, however, is a more involved discussion. How, for example, does the relation between form and matter in material substances, according to which they are essentially one apply to the relation between soul and body in living substances? This we turn to now.

§1.3 – The Nature of Human Persons as Hylomorphic Compounds

i. The Definition of ‘Person’

Having considered the importance of hylomorphic substances as *unum simpliciter*, we come now to how this account informs Aquinas’ definition of ‘person’, in particular, ‘human person’. In these five subsections, we will turn directly to the first of two main sections in the *ST*, the discussion of the personhood of the Trinity, and by extension, human personhood. Firstly, I will set out the definition as it was first stated by Boethius: an individual substance of a rational nature. The next two subsections will focus on what is meant by ‘substance’ in this sense, and what it means to be of, of subsist in, a rational nature. Finally, I will consider some of the more contemporary issues with this definition as pertaining to human persons, before returning to the text to discuss Aquinas’ own take on the concept ‘person’, and how and why his definition differs from Boethius’. I will turn, first, then to the definition of ‘person’ in the context of general discussion about human beings.

It is interesting to note that many writers on the topic of human nature feel no inclination to discuss the concept of human personhood at all.²⁴ For some, ‘this person’, ‘this man’ and ‘this human being’, are co-referential terms, pointing to a specific member of the species *Homo sapiens*, where human animality implies human personhood and vice versa. For others, (human) personhood is only a temporary or accidental aspect of human nature, and certainly not essential to being a human animal. Nonetheless, it is an essential point of scholastic animalism that human personhood is just as important to our study of human nature as is human animality. Furthermore, if a human person is to be understood as a person of a particular kind, that is, human, it will be necessary to start with the concept of ‘person’, and answer some of the following: Is a person necessarily a living thing? Must a person be rational or merely have the potential to be? Is it an essential characteristic that a person be self-conscious or even conscious at all?

²⁴ The assumption being, particularly among philosophers, that ‘person’ is necessarily human, and therefore does not need qualifying. However, it is still very much common usage to refer to the angels and the persons of the Trinity as persons. I specify therefore ‘human person’ to avoid any confusion.

Aquinas begins his discussion of personhood in the context of the Holy Trinity, first defining the concept generally, and then applying it to Christian theology about God. It is important to note here that, as is usual with Aquinas, these terms are always used of God analogically. This is not because the term ‘person’ is attributed more perfectly to human beings say, for it is the Christian belief that man’s personhood is a reflection of the Trinity’s, but because we cannot accurately describe God. ‘Person’, then, is seen as the best fit term for the members of the Trinity. However, our interests in this section lie with human personhood, and so I will not be discussing how the term is used of God here, though one should be aware that such extrapolations will lead to difficulty where such terms are applied more than analogically. Hence Richard of St Victor describes the person of God as “the incommunicable existence of the divine nature” (1a, 29.3). With no time to explain how the term ‘person’ is first used of the Trinity, and also of angels and humans, we will focus on the aspects of the definition that apply to human persons only where possible.

Aquinas’ definition of a person, then, comes out of a discussion of Late Antique theologian Boethius (5th to 6th century AD), which is given in the Latin as *naturae rationalis individua substantia* (“an individual substance of a rational nature”)²⁵. In his usual style, Aquinas answers the question of what a person is by telling us what a person is not. There are five views he explicitly dismisses, though only those concerning individuality and nature are of relevance here. We shall therefore consider these briefly, before looking in more detail at exactly what this definition consists in.

Firstly then, there is a question of why Boethius used the phrase ‘individual substance’ when substance already seems to refer to a primary substance. Such usage would therefore be redundant. Aquinas seems to see this as a misunderstanding, arguing that it is only by ‘individual’ that we know we speak of first substances, due to the typical usage of ‘substance’ covering both first and second substances. Furthermore, with the absence of the indefinite article in the Latin *substantia*, it is not clear whether the person is defined as ‘a substance’ or just ‘substance’, a count noun or a mass noun. The addition of ‘individual’ removes the uncertainty. The person as defined by ‘an individual substance’ is therefore regarded as a primary substance (Latin: *substantia*) in the sense described above; a person is this particular *thing* rather than a category of things. This notion of individual substance will become more relevant when we move on to discussing the substance of the soul, but for now we shall return to addressing some of the possible problems with the Boethian definition, according to Aquinas.

Next, it is debated whether because Aristotle defined nature as “that principle of change and permanence in a subject which is intrinsic to it and not accidental” (Aristotle, cited in Aquinas, *ibid*), Boethius, and by extension Aquinas, should have used ‘essence’ in the definition of person not ‘nature’, on the grounds that persons are changeless, as in the case of God. However, Aquinas argues that ‘essence’ would be too general in the case of ‘rational essence’, whereas nature is what gives a substance its form through specific

²⁵ ST 1a. 29.1 arg. 1

difference; nature completes the definition. Furthermore, if the definition of ‘person’ is an individual substance of a rational nature, then this is its essence. To say that ‘person’ is defined in terms of its form, as opposed to its essence, is to deny the importance of the composite (form and matter), at least for human persons, though I shall leave the explanation of this for the moment.

Additionally, defining a person as an individual substance of a rational essence is to say that a person is an individual substance that is essentially rational. This implies that it is necessary for a person to be rational at all times, rather than just being part of a species for which rationality is a natural property. That is to say, it is in the nature of man to be a rational being, but man does not stop being man at those points when he is not able to actually exercise rationality, for example, later stages of foetal development²⁶, deeper levels of unconsciousness, early dementia and so on.

ii. *Individual Substance as Subsisting Thing*

We can now see that the Boethian definition is generally structured in terms of a genus, ‘individual substance’, which is first substance, and a specific difference²⁷, ‘rational nature’; this is the essence of a human person. For other types of persons, namely, angels and divine, we may rightly call them individual substances of a rational nature, but understand this in a different way. Although clearly angels are of a different species from human beings, rational nature does not distinguish them. Instead, such is a property of all persons, human and spiritual. This, however, is a study of its own, so we shall set it aside for now.

So, what is it for something to be an individual substance? In one sense, an individual substance is taken to be a primary substance, which, for Aquinas, is a being in the proper sense. But in another, Aquinas seems to favour a slightly different interpretation from Boethius, according to his metaphysics. He writes most notably in the *Questionae disputatae de potentia* (hereafter, *QDP*), further to his responses in Q27, of how substance can be broken down into subcategories of which individual substance is one, called ‘hypostasis’. Then, ‘hypostasis’ (in the Greek), which is ‘first substance’ (in the Latin), is further subdivided, where the individual substance of a rational nature is specifically named as ‘person’ (*QDP* IX, 2, co.). However, while hypostasis is translated as first substance, it is to be understood not as being (Greek: *ousia* (essence)), but as ‘subsisting thing’, such is an individual mode of existence, that is, a being that exists as a subject. On one level, therefore, when the Greeks spoke of three hypostases in God, they meant the same as the Latin writers did by saying there are three persons in God. However, according to Aquinas, in its proper usage, hypostasis is less specific than person, and applies to all first substances.

But to understand person in terms of hypostases, we first need a better grasp of the more basic concept ‘subsistence’. A subsistence is simply a being that subsists, that is, exists independently as the subject or the

²⁶ Here, the foetus has received the human soul, giving it the potential to be rational, but it is not yet ready to exercise that rationality. This shall be explored in detail in the final section.

²⁷ That is, a difference between species. In the case of human persons, rational nature distinguishes them from other animals.

“underlying thing subsisting in the category of substance” (29.2, co.). Within the category of substance are then three other senses of the word, namely, ‘a thing of nature’ (called secondary or second substance), hypostasis and subsistence. Just as substance is used of essence, first substance and second substance, Aquinas also has three other terms. Hypostasis is defined as that which supports accidental qualities – literally ‘substance’. ‘A thing of nature’ underlies a specific nature, which is second substance in Aristotle’s terminology. Subsistences, then, include hypostases, but are not reduced to just individual substances. Persons, therefore, are both hypostases (individual substances) and subsistences (subsisting beings); the two terms essentially pick out different qualities of the same existing reality. In the same way, a person might be both a father and a man, but the way in which he is a father is different from the way in which he is a man. Further, all fathers are men, just as all hypostases are subsistences. A better definition of ‘person’ for Aquinas, then, is *that which subsists in a rational nature*, with no reference to substance in the usual sense, and therefore avoids the problem of the divine Persons being three hypostases, but one substance. However, it is quite clearly necessary that any theory positing identity between human persons and human animals will require the definition of a person (at least a human person) to be a primary substance. Therefore, a ‘subsisting thing’ can only be part of what it is to be a human person; the rest is accounted for by what it means to subsist in a rational nature.

iii. *Rational Nature*

So, what is it to be ‘of a rational nature’ or to ‘subsist in a rational nature’? Firstly, as mentioned above, the subsisting being is said to be of a rational nature, as opposed to being described as a rational, subsisting being. Aquinas writes in his reply to the objections in the first article, that ‘rational nature’ marks the being out as belonging to a category of rational substances. Belonging to the category ‘rational substances’ must equate to subsisting as a being of the nature ‘rational’, which we might understand as belonging to the category of beings with a rational nature. Nonetheless, we still do not know what it is to belong to said category or have said nature. There is no time to go into much detail as to what is meant by a category in this sense, but it is not obviously apparent that a member of the category ‘rational substances’ would cease to belong to that category if it stopped being rational. ‘Rational substance’ merely tells us what sort of being it is.

Nonetheless, there is no requirement for a person to have a rational nature in this sense, in order to be a person. In fact, this is one of the ways in which human persons are distinguished from spiritual persons, despite both having rational natures. For the human person, rational nature is on account of being a material body informed by an immaterial, rational soul, according to the hylomorphic picture of reality, as will be further developed in the next section. For a spiritual person, it likely makes no sense to speak of a soul at all, and we certainly cannot speak of God and Angels in material terms, whether or not they could in some way be hylomorphic beings, as in the case of composite substances. However, this is beyond the scope of this research, and so we shall set it aside here in order to focus on the cogency of the Boethian/Thomistic definition of person for human persons.

iv. Contemporary Issues

At this point, then, we should consider some objections to the view that the definition of a subsisting being of a rational nature should apply to human persons, before beginning to look in more detail at how exactly the rational nature is to be understood. Firstly, there is a question of sufficiency. Given that a (human) person may be defined in the above terms, then each person's persistence conditions must at the least depend upon his being a subsisting being of a rational nature. Nonetheless, it has often been questioned whether it is really sufficient to describe the nature of a human being as merely essentially rational. This is the view of Peter Simpson (1988), who writes with reference solely to the Boethian definition of 'person'²⁸, though much of it is still relevant to the present discussion. He argues:

[...] the absence of any mention of the bodily and an explicit reference to the rational only runs the risk of fostering a dangerously false view of the human being, giving the impression that the emotional, the imaginative, the artistic, the historically embodied, are not as integral to the person as the rational. (p. 211)

Just prior to this reference, Simpson comments on the lack of mention of either a body or physical attributes in the Boethian definition, suggesting briefly that such a move may have allowed it to apply additionally to angels and deities (pp. 210-11), though later dismissing this. One must question, therefore, whether he has intentionally taken the definition out of context, or simply misunderstood the nature of Boethius's discussion, as essentially pertaining to the nature of the person of Jesus Christ, as one person with two natures²⁹. As it happens, Boethius spends very little time on how his definition might also apply to human beings in general. Such a task is really only taken up by Aquinas, and only as a separate study (*Treatise on Man*). As a result of this mistake, though, Simpson argues that should the definition turn out to be incompatible with spiritual beings, though we call them persons, then theologians will have to find a different term for them, despite the fact that persons are not necessarily human. For Aquinas, like Boethius, such an idea would have made no sense, given that his philosophy was tied up with his theology, and his understanding of person formed out of his knowledge of Christian doctrine. Moreover, if a human being's personhood results analogically from the Trinity's, it would not be possible to understand the former without the latter. This is certainly bound up in the Boethian definition of 'person', but it need not be assumed for the sake of this philosophical study of personhood.

Simpson's objection, then, is purely with regard to the embodiment and essential characteristics of human personhood, though he references Boethius's general definition of 'person' as the basis for his criticism, adding further confusion by using 'person' interchangeably with 'human being'. In some ways, it will be difficult to answer to these objections, given that neither Boethius nor Aquinas has actually provided a definition of 'human person', and does not anywhere state that being an individual substance of a rational

²⁸ Found in Boethius' *Liber de Persona et Duabus Naturis Contra Eutychen Et Nestorium*, 3

²⁹ This was the position of the orthodox Christians against certain heresies of the day.

nature is sufficient for *human* personhood, only for personhood in general. Nonetheless, even without a specific definition, it seems that one can make a case for the adequacy of the Boethian/Thomistic definition. In the first instance, there is no reason why we should want to define ‘person’ as necessarily embodied, for there is nothing in the concept that rules out non-embodied persons, either in the case of angels and deities, or under a personalist theory of personal identity³⁰ whereby material bodies are not considered necessary for persistence.

Furthermore, in the case of human persons, Simpson’s objection seems to be based on a misconception as to what is meant by rational nature. Instead he interprets ‘rational nature’ as a property of the substance, such that a person is merely an individual substance of a rational nature. However, this is clearly not the claim that either Boethius or Aquinas is making. In one sense, it is not strong enough, for it disregards the importance of rational nature as that of a rational soul informing a physical body in the case of human persons, and in another, it is too strong, given the original account seems to allow that “an individual creature may display no signs of rationality or self-consciousness and yet be a person, provided it belongs to a rational kind”, as in the case of infants, the mentally ill and those in comas (Teichman, 1985, p. 181). This misinterpretation then leads Simpson, and likely others, to want to add ‘bodily’ or ‘animal’ to the definition, to give the concept of ‘an animated reasoning body’ (pp. 218-19), which is a bit of a strange idea, given that we would not normally attribute thought to bodies, and persons are surely more than just bodies. Instead, for human persons, the requirement of a body is implied by the definition, such that adding these concepts would either be redundant, or else make the definition too specific to human persons, when it is intended to be applicable to all things we might term persons, by virtue of how ‘rational nature’ is accounted for in each case. For example, the way in which a human person is an individual substance of a rational nature is partly in terms of its animality. Further, as we discussed earlier, the phrase ‘individual substance’ signified different beings in different cases: subsisting thing for the Trinity, true primary substance for man, on account of what his rational nature consists in. It would, therefore, be acceptable to offer a definition of a *human* person in addition, but it is debatable whether this is necessary.

On a similar note, to regard the human person as having a rational nature does not negate the possibility of his having any other characteristics necessarily anyway. An omission is not the same as a negation. There is nothing in the Boethian definition that rules out the emotional, the imaginative and the artistic, and while Simpson regards them as accidental on this view, they could be said to be proper accidents, that is, those properties that follow from the essence, and are therefore just as fundamental to the person as rationality. That is not to say that all human persons are emotional, imaginative and artistic, but that these characteristics exist, as with rationality, at least potentially, in all persons. It is then only essential that human persons have the capacity for emotion, imagination and art, and not that they be actualised. Furthermore, one could see rational nature as subsuming all faculties of soul found in more simple creatures, and so assuming that at least some non-human animals could be said to have a capacity for emotion etc., as is more than likely, then

³⁰ This will be the subject of chapter 3

the human rational soul may also have such potentiality. It seems that emotion etc. is necessarily part of the nature of human persons, therefore, and there is nothing to suggest that the other characteristics, at least of human beings as stated by Simpson, could not be either.

v. *The Boethian-Thomistic Definition*

However, perhaps Aquinas had some of these thoughts in mind, for later on in the section on the divine persons he describes persons not as subsisting beings of a *rational* nature, but instead of an *intelligent* or *intellectual*³¹ nature. For, in a narrow sense, rationality tends to imply a process of thought, whereby the thinker can use and obtain knowledge – a property inconsistent with an omniscient God - whereas, Aquinas understands it to mean instead that persons “have control over their actions, and are not only acted upon as other beings are, but act of their own initiative” (1a, 29.1, co.). Furthermore, in *QDP* XI, Aquinas explains that for Boethius, rational was intended to be considered in this broader sense of the word, equivalent to intellectual (29.2, ad 10). This then is generally understood in terms of true individuality, to be agents of activity and responsibility. Therefore, a person is best defined as *that which subsists in an intellectual nature* (*ibid*, 3, ad 1), which is what the term truly signifies.

As a definition for human person, though, ‘subsists in an intellectual nature’ seems to be equivalent to having a human soul and therefore an intellect. This, then, is more than being in a subsistent being belonging to a group of intellectual beings. For Aquinas, persons must also actually or potentially reason, which rules out the unminded, such as the early term foetus, even though we may want to still call it a person. If, then, Aquinas’ notion of rational nature entails more than just being of a species whose natural members exhibit rationality, we may want to take issue with this definition. This we shall consider shortly.

Seeing as the Thomistic account stands for the view that human persons and human animals are identical, it should not surprise us to see that the definition of human person, formed out of a specific instance of the original ‘person’ definition, is intended to apply to human animals also. Just as being a person is part of the essence of what it is to be human, we shall see in this next section that animality is of equal significance. Furthermore, as was touched upon in the last section, animality is to some extent assumed by the original definition, in accordance with what it means for a human person to have a rational or intellectual nature, though Aquinas does not actually provide a definition for ‘human person’.

§1.4 – The Intellective Soul as the Form of the Body

i. *The Nature of Man*

Now that the term ‘person’ has been defined in accordance with Aquinas’ metaphysical and biblical commitments, we are able to focus on the specific understanding of the concept ‘human person’, that is both

³¹ These seem to be equivalent, differing between translations

‘human animal’ and ‘human being’. Having discussed already various aspects of God and creation, Aquinas comes now to his Treatise on Man, where we find his account of the nature of human beings and the role the soul plays in man’s existence and mental and physical function. The focus of this section is therefore the human soul, the form of the body, as explains man’s category of being as a first substance. In the following six subsections, we shall consider the nature of the human soul in more depth. Firstly, I shall apply the previous discussion on hylomorphic substances to human persons, to understand in what sense man is said to be a composite substance. We then come to the intellectual soul, considering four particular aspects of its nature, some of which apply to the souls of living things in general, while others are unique to the human soul. In the next three subsections, I will explain and analyse what it means for the soul to be a substantial form, in what sense the material body equates to the matter in a hylomorphic substance, and the implications this has for understanding a human being to be one composite substance. The status of the human soul as the substantial form of the material body is crucial for Aquinas’ account of man, but it prevents a number of new issues. These will be discussed in the final subsection. First, therefore, we turn to Q75 in the prima pars.

In the prologue to the Treatise on Man (*ST*, 1a, 75), Aquinas states that man, that is human beings, must be considered compound substances whose nature is both spiritual and corporeal. More typically in Aristotle, we find the differing concepts on material and immaterial, but for Augustine, whose philosophy and theology Aquinas holds in high regard, it is more useful to speak of corporeal and incorporeal or spiritual substances. This difference is not, as it might appear, with reference to whether a thing has a body (in the sense of living body) or otherwise, but whether it is itself a body (that is, a material substance). This understanding is closest to the modern usage found in theoretical science with reference to objects in time and space. Object is perhaps misleading, as we probably would not refer to a living being as an object, however, “body” in this sense, would also apply to such beings, for they are in time and space. Bodies are therefore physical or material substances, with three dimensions (*ibid*, 18.2, co.), and they are considered to be corporeal, from the Latin *corpus*, meaning “body”. Human beings, therefore, are both corporeal and spiritual, in the sense of being material beings with spiritual souls.

We notice, also, that although both corporeal and spiritual in the above sense, man is said to be a substance. As was found in our study of the concept of personhood, there is nothing inherent in the nature of a substance that necessitates that it must be corporeal, or at least partly corporeal (as with human persons), although it is Aquinas’ belief that purely spiritual beings, such as angels, do not consist of form and matter as with composite substances. Human persons, on the other hand, are said to be composite substances, namely material bodies informed by rational souls. This is the essence of human personhood, which, when combined with accidents, accounts for the ontological nature of human persons. The key to understanding human nature, therefore lies with the soul and in what way it explains man’s embodiment, such that one cannot understand what it is to be a human animal, and thus a human person, by purely studying its bodily character. According to scholastic animalism, the concept of a person as a subsisting being of an intellectual nature

applies equally to human animals as human persons, and so such a definition must be equivalent to that of man as a material body informed by a rational intellective soul. This we shall turn to now.

ii. *The Nature and Powers of the Intellective Soul*

The first few questions in the *Treatise on Man* concern the nature of the soul, its relationship to the material body, and a discussion of its powers, with particular emphasis on the intellectual power. There are a number of problems discussed in these questions, but only five areas will really concern us, namely, the soul's nature as incorporeal, subsistent, and incorruptible, the powers of the soul, and the role of the intellect in the composite person. I will discuss each issue in turn, firstly considering Aquinas' own arguments for the position, against the given objections, and then some of the more contemporary arguments against the soul as an immaterial substantial form animating a material body.

I. Incorporeality

Firstly then, Aquinas contests the view that the soul is something corporeal, or material, that is, a body. He begins by explaining that the notion of soul as it applies here is that of the root principle of life in living things, where the distinction between living and non-living things is with regards to whether they are animate or inanimate, that is, with or without a soul (1a, 75.1, co.). This is then very different from any idea of the soul as mind or the part of the person that makes that person who he is, as in substance dualism or more contemporary thought. Instead, the soul is more like the breath in one's lungs, as we find in the Greek, *psukhé*, literally, 'breath', 'life' and 'soul'. However, soul is not actually breath or life, but the cause of life, that is, the root cause of life. As Aquinas explains, it is necessary to specify that soul is the *root* principle of life, for there are other principles of vital activity that are not souls, for example, the eyes, which endow living beings with the power of sight.

Furthermore, even though the heart is the principle of life for animals, it is not itself the root principle of life, for it has itself an actuating principle, that is, the soul. Being a body is not sufficient to be a principle of life, for then all bodies would be alive or be life-sources. Instead, each living or life-giving body must be a body of a particular kind. Considering again the heart, just as one can ask what it is that makes a human being alive, the same can be asked of the heart, and any other secondary principles of vital activity. The soul is itself the primary principle of life, the actuating principle, and so we cannot ask of the soul what makes it alive. It might not even make sense to speak of an actuating principle as being alive or dead, at least not while part of an animal, for the soul only remains embodied while there is life, and there can only be life (or at least biological life) when the soul is present. This is not so for the heart or eye, however, given that the death of some such organs does not necessitate the death of the animal. One can keep an animal alive even after the heart has failed, but not the soul; it is either there as the root life-principle, or it is not there at all. Furthermore, life, as we usually understand it, does not seem to be a property that is attributable to the soul, just as size, shape and colour do not. For, it is not the soul that is alive, but the animal, and so the concept of a dead soul is perhaps fundamentally obscure. At the point of death, the soul either ceases to exist at all or it

continues, as Aquinas' believes about humans, until it reanimates the body. On the other hand, this biological interpretation of life is not accepted by Aquinas, as say with angels. Instead, he regards anything to have life that moves or has operation of any kind by its own determination (1a, 18.1, co.). This issue is one for later, however, concerning the discussion of the separated soul following the death of the living being.

Here, we are interested in why it is necessary for the soul to be something other than a body in order to be the actuating principle of each animal. The first issue, with regards to how the soul causes movement in the body without itself being subject to movement, is regarded by Aquinas as a mistake on behalf of 'philosophers of old'³², who believed that all that existed were bodies, and something that was not a body, was not any real thing. For this reason, they could not understand how a being could exist that is moved accidentally, but not essentially, yet which moves the body, which is moved essentially. This is the soul, in its act as the first principle of life.

Furthermore, the second two issues also seem to be based on apparent misconceptions about the soul's nature and activity. The first denies the soul's capacity to have in its nature the likenesses of corporeal things, while the second questions the soul's ability to move the body without itself being a body. On the first instance, then, just as colour is only potentially in the retina of the eye, corporeal things are only potentially in the soul. The soul only needs to have a capacity for these likenesses. Some of these ideas seem to come from St Augustine, who discusses the soul's immateriality in terms of its ability to understand the greatest of things (the purely immaterial) and the least of things (the purely material). It must, therefore, be itself like the greatest of things in order to understand them. This he explains with reference to a single point, which has itself zero dimensions, but is some real thing, for it can be extended into all dimensions³³. In the same way, therefore, the soul for Aquinas must itself be incorporeal in order to know corporeal things.

Finally, then, Aquinas briefly addresses the matter of the soul's contact with bodies. He explains that contact can be quantitative, which applies only to bodies, or causal, where an incorporeal agent can act upon a body. Very little explanation is given here, but there is the suggestion that the soul's union with the body involves causal contact, which is only achieved where the incorporeal acts upon the corporeal, as in the case of soul and body. Therefore, the soul's nature as incorporeal is required for the role it plays as the form of the body.

II. Subsistence

Secondly, Aquinas tackles objections against what he terms the weak subsistence of the soul, as follows from its incorporeality. For us to understand the discussion around this question though, it is necessary to consider the concept of substance with regards to the property of subsistence. We are told two things about substances: they must subsist and be the underlying subject of accidents (*QDP* 9.1c). As was discussed previously, all substances subsist, but not all subsisting beings are first substances, that is, not all subsisting

³² Referenced from Aristotle's *De Anima* I, 2. 4.03b29f, as Democritus, the Pythagoreans and Anaxagoras

³³ St Augustine, *De Quantitate Animae*

beings substand. Most notable is the hand or foot, which is not a hypostasis, but a subsistence, that is a subsisting being, as part of a substance. The other important example of a subsisting thing that is not actually a substance is of course the soul. The human person as composite consists of an animal body and an intellectual soul, which is the substantial form of the material body. This is what it means for a human person to be a subsisting being of an intellectual nature. However, it is not as simple as defining a subsisting being as ‘animal body’ and an intellectual nature as ‘intellective soul’, for the nature of material composite substances is always accounted for by both form and matter. Furthermore, ‘subsisting thing’ alone does not mean any more than subsistence; it is the intellectual nature that tells us what sort of a being it is, namely, a composite substance.

The human soul³⁴ then is a subsisting being/something that subsists, for nothing can act of itself unless it subsists in its own right (75.2, co.), and it is in this sense that soul is called substance. However, there are two senses of subsisting that Aquinas addresses here, one pertaining to primary substances (subsistence *per se*) and one to parts of primary substances, for example, a hand or foot, though both are said to exist as subjects. The other phrase used of such beings is ‘this particular thing’, which applies both to anything that subsists (excluding accidents and separated forms), that is, weakly subsisting beings, and also to those things that subsist fully in their nature, that is, complete substances or strongly subsisting beings. Anything, moreover, that could be the subject of a sentence is ‘this particular thing’ in one or other sense. A part, therefore, can still be a particular thing, but only in the first sense, not the second, for parts are only weakly-subsistent beings.

However, what is less clear from this passage is whether for Aquinas the soul subsists merely as this particular thing or *per se*. This is not something he addresses explicitly, but we are given some clues in the reply to the second objection, regarding the activity of the soul. Here he distinguishes between subsisting and subsisting *per se*, and explains how the activity of a part is attributed to the whole through that part, for example, seeing with the eye or feeling with the hand. Here, we state that the man sees or feels, rather than the eye or hand does. He compares this to the understanding of the soul. Truly, the soul does not understand, just as the eye does not see, but instead, the man understands through or with his soul. It seems, then, that if the soul has the same type of actuality as the eye, it too must be a subsisting thing as a part, also known as a weakly subsisting being, and not subsisting *per se*. Furthermore, Aquinas appears to regard the soul as part of the complete animal, and as no part can subsist *per se*, the soul must only be substantial³⁵ in the weaker sense. As well as being the logical conclusion to be drawn from Aquinas’ responses to the objections, it is also the view most commonly attributed to him, as well as the one he seems to support in the next question.

³⁴ Aquinas specifically states in question 75.3 that the souls of animals are not subsistent as man’s is.

³⁵ This is another term Aquinas uses for something that subsists. It is from here that he sometimes refers to the soul as a substance, but this is to be understood not as first substance, but as subsisting being – part of a first substance, that is the human animal.

III. Incorruptibility

Similarly, Aquinas argues that on account of the soul's subsistence, it must necessarily be incorruptible. The argument for this position is split into two types of discussions: those using biblical Scripture to support this view, and those considering the philosophical and theological implications of the soul not being incorruptible, both found in question 75 article 6. In the first case, Aquinas defends his position in accordance with passages of Scripture from Ecclesiastes 3 and Wisdom 2, against those who have taken the passages out of context, and thus concluded that because man and beast have the same beginning, the same life processes, and therefore the same ending, if the souls of brute animals are corruptible, so too will the human soul (6, ad. 1). Instead, these are the thoughts of the unwise, which are later condemned in both chapters. Therefore, it is not the Christian belief that man's lot is as the beast's, or that man comes from nothing. Instead, Aquinas turns to the well-known passage in Ecclesiastes 12, which concludes the book, stating that the dust of man will return to the earth from where it was taken, and the spirit to God who gave it. Little is said regarding the meaning of this verse, but it is assumed that the relationship between dust and spirit is equal to that between body and soul. Given Aquinas' biblical commitments, this proof in the Scriptures would already have been at least partly adequate, but he also offers some philosophical arguments for the soul's incorruptibility.

In the second instance, Aquinas argues that just as being created is not related to some tendency in the creature, but by the power of God, the ability to be destroyed is just God's power not to give it being, and not some tendency in the creature towards non-existence. Conversely, to say that a being is corruptible is to say that it has an internal disposition towards destruction (75.6 ad. 2). As a result, without the Creator's influence, the soul will last forever; actuality belongs to the soul *per se*. One might then ask why this is not true of all creatures. The answer seems to lie in the human soul's subsistence. Aquinas explains this in the reply to article 6. The human soul differs from the souls of brute animals in that it is said to have subsistence and therefore being *per se*, and as a result it can only pass away *per se*. Whereas animal souls, as non-subsisting things, are said to both come-to-be and cease-to-be as a result of the coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be of the compounds to which they belong (75.6, co.).

There seem to be two issues with the above explanation. Firstly, these comments on the soul's existence *per se* seem to contradict an earlier question, where Aquinas argued that although the soul is called this particular thing, its subsistence is that of a part, which is not subsistence *per se*. He is careful in article 2 not to speak of the soul's existence, but to emphasise the man's, given that 'soul' should not be taken as a thing in the same way 'man' should. What then can we say about article 6? One thought is that when Aquinas speaks of the soul as being *per se*, he is referring not to the soul as the form of the body, but to the soul in a separated state, prior to the resurrection of the body. If this is true though, we still have no good reason to believe that the soul as the form of the body, which does not have existence *per se*, but is only weakly subsistent, has more claim to an incorruptible nature than the souls of brute animals. On the other hand, perhaps we could say

that, though the soul is weakly not strongly subsistent, unlike the souls of animals, it is still subsistent in some sense.

The second issue concerns the weakly subsistence of the human soul versus the weakly subsistence of say a human hand. What is it that makes the former incorruptible, and the latter corruptible? The answer to this lies in the role and substance of the soul compared to any other part of the composite. While both the hand and the soul are weakly subsistent due to their being parts of the whole human person, the soul alone is a form, to which actuality belongs *per se*. For the hand, however, it ceases to be on account of losing its function, for which it depends on the soul.

However, this view of soul as an incorruptible form has led some of Aquinas' critics to suggesting that the soul is the same sort of substance as an angel, for neither is a composite of form and matter, but wholly immaterial. There are a number of reasons why for Aquinas this cannot be case. We shall start with the idea from §1.2 of angels as being both persons and complete substances, which shows both that angels are of a different kind from souls, and that they are not purely forms either, as Aquinas sometimes seems to indicate. Firstly, as was discussed with regards to the definition of a person, angels, like the Persons of the Trinity, are divine persons, not merely a part of a whole, which is itself a person. This was a point of contention between Boethius and Aquinas, who disagreed on the status of souls. For Boethius, humans, angels, souls and the Persons of the Trinity are all persons (pp. 83-5)³⁶, but for Aquinas, souls are not themselves persons but the 'part' of man that makes him a human person. Furthermore, angels, as persons, are separate substances, whereas souls are merely weakly subsistent beings.

There is confusion here, however, as both souls and angels consist of form but not of matter. Souls are pure forms, specifically substantial forms, and as such, they can only be parts of composite substances. Angels, on the other hand, are purely immaterial, but cannot be pure forms because they are composite substances, though Aquinas does seem to refer to them as subsisting forms in various places. It seems that he cannot have meant this though, because he says clearly in the reply to article 7, that it is inconceivable how pure form can be multiplied within one species (75.7 co.), given that it is matter that individuates form, and additionally that there is act and potentiality in angels, such that he is composed of "what is" (form) and "whereby he is" (existence) (50.1 ad. 3). Whether this be a good argument or not is outside our concerns here, but it is necessary to explain it in order to account for the way the soul's nature differs from that of an angel. Another reason for this difference is that angels have different natural activities, whereby they do not derive knowledge from the visible world, while the soul can only fully understand through the body (75.7 s. c.).

³⁶ Boethius (circa early sixth century), "A Treatise Against Eutyches and Nestorius", *The Theological Tractates*

IV. The Intellect

There is no time for an in-depth study of the powers of soul, but in order to understand the nature of the human soul in making a person necessarily rational, we must consider the intellectual power in some detail. The most significant property of the intellect is that, despite being a capacity of the soul, and not part of the soul's essence (79.1), it does not act through any bodily organ, and instead surpasses the scope of the body (79.6). This is required, according to Aquinas, in order for the soul to understand, or rather, for the man to understand through the soul. For, if the intellect were to act through a bodily organ, say the brain, it would lack the ability to be a capacity for the understanding of incorporeal beings. Instead, this is achieved because of the intellect's capacity to function apart from the corporeal body, and thereby beyond the scope of both bodily organs and sensory experience. This is not to say, however, that it cannot additionally make use of the lower powers of the soul, just that it is not restricted to these powers and unable to act independently.

Furthermore, we find that the intellect's capacity to act apart from a bodily organ is necessary for the soul's incorruptibility, and in turn, a human person's essence as a being subsisting in an intellectual nature. Given that the soul is essentially rational, it cannot be the case that it can continue to exist without the capacity for reason. However, within the separated soul, the intellect can only continue to function if it can do so without the material body. Therefore, while all the powers are said to be the principle of the soul, only intellect (and will) belong to the soul alone as the subject (77.8); the other capacities belong to the composite as subject. It is for this reason that Aquinas tends to speak of intellect and will as belonging to the subject in a greater way than any of the other capacities, such that, the intellect remains in the soul in its separated state, while the lower powers exist only virtually, for their act is of corporeal organs only.

While it is said to be necessary for the intellect to continue to function outside the composite substance, this seems to give it a level of subsistence over and above the soul itself. The soul, as we have already discussed, is a weakly subsisting being that is not complete in its capacities, except as part of the composite. Conversely, the intellect has no direct relationship with the material body at all, such that it is almost unaffected by the end of biological life. We might say at this point that just as the soul does not itself act, but the man through the soul, the intellect, as a power of the soul, does not either. However, it cannot be the case that the man reasons through the intellect if the man himself does not exist between death and resurrection, given that the operations of the intellect may continue. The intellect, then, must remain in the soul, though it is unclear whose thoughts these must be. More on this in the final section.

In order to explain the relationship between the soul and intellectual power though, we must first consider the role of the soul in the composite human person, in accordance with its incorporeality, incorruptibility and subsistence as a part of a whole substance.

iii. *Soul as Substantial Form*

At this point, I wish to take a moment to address confusion over the different senses of ‘body’, as seen throughout the discussions in these questions. It is the context alone that provides hints as to the usage, for the English and Latin words are the same in each case, but it is still of benefit to take some time out to look at them, just as Aquinas does in *DEE* (“The word ‘body’ can be taken in many ways [...]”, cap. 1) Three senses of ‘body’ concern us here:

1. referring to material objects – the usual scientific usage, three-dimensional beings. For example, “just as it belongs to a light body to float upwards” (76.1 ad. 6)
2. referring to the whole living organism, a living body or substance. For example, “of a compound body, such as a mineral or a living thing” (76.4 ad. 4), and “by the one same essential form man exists, is a body, is alive, is an animal, and is a man” (76.6 ad. 1)
3. referring to the non-spiritual part of a human being, i.e. man as a composite of soul and body. For example, “it is plain that man is no mere soul, but a compound of soul and body” (75.4 co.)

There is no need to explicitly differentiate between the first two, however, because the human animal as a composite of form and matter (and accidents) is an instance of a scientific, that is, material body, having three dimensions, and being subject to the forces of nature. Nonetheless, not all things that would count as material bodies are hylomorphic substances, for example, statues, so the relation is only one way, that is, all bodies (sense 2) are bodies (sense 1). The complication, then, lies between living human animals (animated bodies) and their bodies in general. It is both true in some sense that the soul is the form of the body (in sense 2), in that the soul gives the body, the person life, and that the soul is united to the body (in sense 3) within the composite. Both these ideas are Aquinas’, but it seems that the mixed uses of ‘body’ just add confusion. Properly-speaking, a body in the final sense cannot actually be conceived of by itself, for the body which the soul moves is already a kind of substance, namely, flesh and bone, informed to have this nature. Furthermore, given that flesh etc. changes all the time, the soul seems to be informing different parcels of matter at different times.

There is, though, only one numerical body (sense 3) because there is one life and one soul. The only way one can really conceive of the body as the non-spiritual part of the human being is in the sense of life after death. When the soul leaves the body, something is left behind. That something should not be called a body, strictly speaking, because ‘body’ is a functional term, but there is still something there. Most call it a corpse, a dead body, or the remains of a human being. Theoretically, this ‘body’ could be reanimated, that is, re-ensouled, so that it would become again a living body (sense 2). Nonetheless, even by reanimation, there is still only one thing (*unum simpliciter*), first, a dead body, then a living one, as is required for something to be a complete substance, and, as we saw in the first section, to have actions attributed to them. It is not enough for the soul and body to exist as one in virtue of being mover and moved (*De unitate intellectus*, 3.148).

With this in mind, let us now turn to question 76, considering the soul's union with the body. Given the previous discussion, however, some of this ground is not new to us. As such, this section will consider problems one, three and four together. The first of the eight problems Aquinas addresses is that of whether the intellective principle (human soul) is united to the body as its form. Nonetheless, the previous question already answered this for us, regarding whether the soul was itself composed of form and matter, and as such it has been argued beforehand that the soul is in fact the form of the body. Before continuing, though, a number of further matters ought to be addressed.

Firstly is the objection that the soul cannot be united to the body in this way on account of its nature, as was discussed in the previous question. This is less about whether the soul could be a form though, and more about whether it could be said to be the form of the body, though both are relevant here. Its nature, as subsisting, incorporeal and incorruptible, seems to give it a separability that received forms do not usually enjoy. Received forms in general are not even weakly subsistent. The souls of brute animals (that is, all souls that are not human souls), for example, though they are forms, do not subsist at all. The human soul, on the other hand, given its ability to carry out operations on its own (on account of intellect), cannot but be capable of existence apart from the composite. The other operations of the soul, shared by animals, do not transcend matter, that is, they require a body. However, it is the soul's subsistence on account of the intellect that adds obscurity to the whole concept of soul as form.

It is clear, therefore, why one would want to take issue with the view that firstly, the human soul is a form, and secondly, that it is the form of the body. A few further thoughts on the former. Although Aquinas has a number of additional points to make in an attempt to consolidate his account, it is here that many modern commentators see the theory as falling apart. Firstly, a form cannot be a substance (as Aquinas sometimes suggests) and be the form of a substance. While there is no logical issue with incorporeal substances, even angels are more than just forms. As such, if a soul is a substance, we would want to ask what its form is, and so on. This leaves two possible conclusions. Either, the soul is not a substance, or it is not a form. That soul is form is Aquinas' most important claim in his account of the metaphysics of human nature, but as was identified regarding the discussion of question 75 article 2, soul is not, and was not intended to be thought of as a substance. Instead, it subsists as that of a part, that which was called weak subsistence.

As we have seen, there is a logical inconsistency with the idea of form as substance, which does not seem to be the case with form as weakly subsistent. Nonetheless, the notion of a substantial form with complete separability is a troubling one. For if a human being were to lose a hand or foot, the existence of that part would, on Aquinas' view, no longer be as a hand or foot, except homonymously, but if that same person were to lose his soul, his body would cease to be, and yet (perhaps counter-intuitively) his mind, that is, the rational faculty of soul (the intellect) would continue to exist. Despite both being weakly subsistent, therefore, a hand and a soul are taken as having very different properties. This, though, may be coincidental. There is nothing logically impossible with the idea of a hand or foot coming into existence apart from a

body, or even continuing to function apart from the body. As Pasnau points out, this is a matter of modality (*ibid*, p. 69). The reason that a soul is said to be able to function apart from the body and a hand is not, is simply that the soul has operations apart from the body, that is, intellect, and a hand does not. However, this is not to say that it *could* not, and therefore, a hand and a soul are said to be subsistent in exactly the same way.

Nevertheless, aside from incorruptibility, soul also has an essential nature that other parts of human beings do not. A hand is not essential to a human being, but a soul is. What sort of weakly subsisting existence does the soul then possess? The puzzle over this matter has led many Aquinas' scholars to wanting to accuse him of trying to have the best of both worlds.³⁷ Let us now turn to the discussion over the nature of soul as a substantial form in order to see why this is.

The first objection to this thesis is with regards to the soul's faculty of understanding: the intellect. Back in the previous question, Aquinas made it clear that the soul is not a body, but the act of the body, while the intellect is neither a body nor the act of any body. Instead, and standing in direct contrast to the faculties of soul responsible for workings of the senses (for example, sight as the act of the eye), the intellect has no bodily application. It is therefore argued that 'intellect' cannot be united to the body as its form when it attains this level of separability. But this is a misunderstanding.

The reference made from Aristotle concerns the part of the soul responsible for understanding, which he and Aquinas both call the intellect, and which Aristotle often speaks about as though it were a separate entity (*De Anima* III, 4). Occasionally, we find the same usage in Aquinas, though typically 'intellect' is used to refer to the whole soul not to a specific power. It seems then that this objection comes out of a misunderstanding of the terms. I refer to the Latin text to explain this. The word *intellectus* is translated as both 'understanding' in the first objection, and 'intellect' in the reply, and yet it cannot be the same concept. Previously, it was stated that the soul, also called intellect, intellectual principle and intellective principle, is the form of the body. It cannot then be the case that faculty of understanding alone is the form of the body, for then the other faculties of soul would have no role in informing the body. However, this is what is happening in the latter two sentences of the first objection: "[...] *quod intellectus est separatus et quod nullius corporis est actus. Non ergo unitur corpori ut forma*" (76.1, arg, 1). It must be that "*intellectus est separatus*" refers to the faculty of soul, not the soul itself, for the soul is the act of the body, which is not so for the power of understanding. Furthermore, the lack of any subject pronoun in the final sentence indicates that this is a continuation of the one before. This objection is, therefore, based on a false premise. The faculty of understanding is not the form of the body; the intellective principle is. Or, to put it another way, the soul is the form of the body, not merely the intellective power.

³⁷ See Kenny (1993) and Pasnau (2002)

Aquinas highlights a number of important reasons for this view. Perhaps most significantly is that, as we have already shown, the soul is united to the body as its substantial form. It may, therefore, be possible for each substance to have a number of forms (accidental and essential), and yet, given the role of the substantial form in unifying all forms and matter in a substance, to the extent where the substance becomes *unum simpliciter*, there can only be one actuating principle fulfilling this role. Furthermore, as was discussed in the first section, the only way the composition of substance as form, matter and accidents make sense, is if the substantial form is of a different ontological kind from the elements it unites. It is not possible, therefore, for one substance to have more than one substantial form. In the case of man, the intellective soul is the form of the body, the principle by which man is made one living substance, and so if man were to possess more than one soul, he could not be only one animal, as he is. It is the soul that holds the body together, so it makes no sense to claim that something else holds the different souls together. Instead, there must be one soul with many powers (76.3, co.).

Similarly, the substantial form (76.4) causes each being to exist, and so must be prior to all accidental forms, that is, those specifying non-essential, changeable properties. No being can have more than one principle of existence, so if the soul is the substantial form in man, nothing else can be. For Aquinas, this is crucial to the cogency of the hylomorphic account of human persons, where the soul not only gives a living being life, but also existence *per se*. It must be affirmed, therefore, that the intellective soul alone informs man to give him both existence *per se* and existence *qua* human animal, such that without it, the thing that exists is just an animal-shaped corpse.

Nonetheless, whether this drawing out of the objection is enough to dissolve it completely will become clear as we consider Aquinas' responses overall. The first of these, then, considers the properties of subsistence and being, arguing, as we saw above, that nothing with *per se* existence could be a form because the very being of form does not belong to form itself, and therefore the soul cannot be the form of the body. It is hard not to agree with Anthony Kenny that Aquinas' response to this objection is wholly inadequate as a reply (1993, p. 150). Nonetheless, I believe he does make a point that has merit on its own grounds. The matter of contention he seems to take from the objection is at the level of being. As form in the composite, soul cannot have being of itself, but it does have a level of subsistence that makes it incorruptible; even after the death of the body, it still exists in some form or other. In what, then, does the being of soul exist? Aquinas' answer is that the unity of soul and body, at the point of soul-fusion, is such that the being of the composite and the being of the soul are one and the same.

On a *prima facie* interpretation, this looks like a strange thing for him to say. How can the act of being of a person's soul and the act of being of the person be the same? This does, however, fit with his other commitments, given the weakly subsistent nature of the human soul, compared to the non-subsistent nature of ordinary forms. Aquinas' account states that when the human soul is infused, it communicates to the bodily matter that of its own existence (act of being; *esse*), without losing that existence in itself, as is

essential for its existence apart from the body. That existence, furthermore, is also the existence of the person (the composite) through the soul. It is this sense that the soul and composite have the same being.

Despite Aquinas' response to the fifth objection failing to adequately address it, however, the conclusion itself seems to be built on a false premise: soul has *per se* existence (that is, it is self-subsistent, a first substance). This claim is both discussed in question 75 and dismissed. The soul is weakly subsistent; it is not a first substance. There is no logical issue with a form having subsistence of this nature, for it is still necessarily united with the body in the composite. However, this leaves a puzzle as to the existence of soul following the death of the body, but more on this later.

The following objection highlights this further. It is argued that as the form of the body, the soul's being the act of the body is a matter of its essence, and so if it can be separated from bodily matter following the corruption of the body, it cannot be the form of the body. This appears to be a matter of logic, but Aquinas' rejection of this reasoning suggests that an assumption has been made that ought not to have been. In the reply to objection four, Aquinas states that the soul, though a form, is neither merged in matter nor entirely embraced by it. It seems then that is not actually a matter of essence that the soul be joined to the body, but of its own disposition. Aquinas compares the disposition of the soul to be joined to a body with that of a light body to float upwards. Both can be displaced, but just as a light body will remain light, a soul will still have a natural tendency towards embodiment during its separation. More questions then stem from this regarding the soul's nature after separation, but we shall return to them in the next section, when considering soul-fusion and the afterlife.

Finally, then, in the discussion prior to the six responses, Aquinas challenges his reader to come up with an alternative view that allows each of us to be the possessor of our own intellectual cognition, that is, to be united with our intellects, without the soul being the form of the body. This he considers his most compelling argument, despite his attempts to meet the objections. Aquinas firstly focuses on two nonreductive accounts of the unification of soul and body, dismissing them both. Each considers the notion of the mover-moved relationship, which has already been touched upon, initially, from body to soul (Averroes), and then from soul to body (Plato). In the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Aquinas additionally comments that any kind of causal relation between soul and body would give a kind of unity like that between a person and his clothing (II.57); this is not genuine, unqualified unity (Pasnau, 2002, p. 77).

Returning to the union of the soul with the body, Aquinas addresses a question in 76.2 regarding the ratio of human souls to human bodies. It might seem obvious that we are looking at a one-one relation, but if form is universal, and souls are forms, one would be justified in asking how each person can have a different soul. The answer to this lies at least partly with the material composition. Unlike angels, human persons are not purely individuated by their differing forms, although Aquinas does hold that no two human souls are the same, both numerically and qualitatively, as shall be discussed in the next section, concerning the separated

soul following the death of the body. Instead “there are many souls of one species due to material differentiation” (1a, 76.2 ad. 1). That is, human souls are additionally differentiated by the material bodies they inform or used to inform.

At this point though, we should be aware of the implications of this idea for the whole thesis. It seems that Aquinas must deny that form alone (that is, separated from matter) is universal, and not particular, or at least that the human form should be viewed this way. It cannot be enough for the human soul to gain particularity from the composite for two reasons. Firstly, each human soul exists individually after death, prior to the resurrection; there is not one soul but many. Secondly, a difference in material composition is not sufficient to explain differences in cognition, given that the intellect acts through no body. Although Aquinas seems to alternate between the terms ‘intellect’ and ‘soul’ in this discussion, it seems that his account as to why there cannot be only one intellect in all men applies just as much to the faculty of understanding is the intellectual principle, that is, to both the soul and its intellectual power. Aquinas explains this in terms of sense-perception and understanding, to demonstrate that the same intellect (and soul) cannot produce different responses in different persons. This is the idea that two different persons can experience the same situation, and yet have different understandings and thought processes afterwards. Furthermore, this concerns not the concept of the soul-body union itself, but the thesis of one intellect operating in all persons *per se*, the implications of which are implausible at best.

It may be true, then, that you and I engage in a thought about the same thing, but it cannot be the case that you and I have the same thought. Our different sense-perceptions produce in us differing sense-images and thought processes, and by extension, intellectual activity. It is through the soul that the man understands, and so different men understand differently on account of their intellectual activity. If there were one soul in all men, each would have the same understanding. This is not the case. Thus, there cannot be only one soul for all men. Furthermore, even if the difference between intellectual activity were only at the level of intellectual power, and not the soul in general, this in turn would result in differences between individual souls on account of differences between individual intellects. For, if each human person has a different intellect (numerical or qualitative), and the intellect is a faculty of the soul, how can it be that there is not a distinct human soul in each person, both before and after separation? As a consequence of this, it seems even more unlikely that there is only one human soul, as was already implied by the account of human soul as substantial form. This does not yet prove that every human soul, in and of itself, is qualitatively different, though later we shall see that Aquinas wants to argue that it is, but it more than suggests that there cannot be only one human soul for all men, just as there cannot be only one intellect for all men. Seeing as Aquinas does not want to un-identify the human soul with the human substantial form, therefore, he must reject Aristotle’s account of form as universal. This is not, however, actually discussed, though must be assumed for the cogency of his account. We shall bear it in mind as we continue.

iv. *Body as Matter*

With an explanation now of how the soul informs the body as its substantial form, Aquinas' task is to explain the nature of the material body which it informs, and why this is necessary. As with other beings, body without form is just prime matter, but more interesting to us here is what that body consists in, and how it changes its being at the point of death. We shall discuss the latter in the next section, but in order to understand the soul's union with the body, we need some idea of the nature of the human body.

It is unclear whether Aquinas' adversaries in article 5 have a different view about the kind of body that the soul informs, or whether they are simply using these arguments to show the flaws in his theory generally, but, either way, they do not seem to hold up under scrutiny. The first point questions how an incorruptible soul could be suited to a corruptible body, and from there arguing that the body must be more like fire to be fit for this purpose, rather than a "compound of mainly earth" (76.5, arg. 2). Point four then adds that a perfect form (soul) needs a more perfect recipient, implying that the human body is poorly suited to such a soul, but that the body of other animals would be. It is certainly true that the human body is more fragile than those of other mammals, but given man's ability to protect and provide for himself by the work of his hands through the activity of his mind, this is no reason to regard his body as 'less perfect' than those creatures whose coats already protect them against heat and cold, and whose weapons are a part of them. In fact, such a being is surely more perfect. While a dog may be protected by his fur and able to defend himself with his teeth, man can make for himself clothing for all climates, and weapons powerful enough to protect him against any other beast.

Returning to the first two objections, then, we have the following argument for why the corruptibility and non-subtlety³⁸ of the human body is both necessary and to its advantage. Aquinas begins his reply by quoting from Aristotle that the soul is joined to a physical organic body. The fact that the body is physical, that is, corporeal, is not surprising within a hylomorphic metaphysics, but we might ask what it means for a body to be organic, and why Aquinas, and indeed Aristotle, should want to hold this thesis. Scientifically-speaking, and an organic body is one that is made up of carbon-based compounds, whereas physiologically-speaking, 'organic' is defined as relating to an organ or organs. Furthermore, in biology, an organic substance is one that is made up of living matter. While all these are true of the human body, it seems that Aristotle intended the word 'organic' in its original meaning: serving as an organ or instrument, where 'organ' just means 'instrument' in the original Latin (*organon*). The implication of the word 'instrument' for the human body demonstrates its role in the human animal as that which is acted upon, making the soul's actuation necessary for the body's continued existence qua living human body.

However, it is also necessary that the body be of the kind that supports organs, due to the nature of the intellective soul. Although higher than the souls of non-human animals, the intellective soul is said to be the

³⁸ Subtle bodies are those least immersed in materiality, such that fire is considered to be more subtle than earth, and the purely immaterial, such as soul, even more so.

lowest of its kind, compared to angels, who have inborn knowledge of truth, instead having to acquire such knowledge through the senses. The power of understanding comes from the soul, but it not the only power required for the intellective soul to inform the body as its substantial form, making it organic and with the power to live. Additionally, it has the lower power of sensation, which although proper to the intellective soul, cannot be actualised without a body – a body moreover with those properties required for it to be an instrument of sensation. An instrument of sensation, though, must occupy that which Aquinas calls the ‘middle ground’ between contraries, such as hot and cold. Yet to be able to sense both hot and cold, the body must have high levels of touch-perceptivity. Aquinas ties insight and sensitivity together, such that he regards man to be the most touch-perceptive of the animals. I note at this point that this has been shown to be false, for there are certain creatures able to detect the presence of earthquakes with their bodies, while man requires a seismometer, but this aside, Aquinas’ example of how the best material for cutting will itself endure wear, does seem to make it plausible that the best body for the soul to inform is a corruptible one. Nonetheless, it is not necessary to prove why this has to be case for us to know that our bodies are indeed physical and organic. We are, however, justified in questioning the role the body has in the outworking of the powers of the soul.

v. Man as a Composite Substance

But how, we might ask, could the soul and body in man be united under such conditions? As we often find with Aquinas, the relevant sections in the *Summa*, concerning the soul’s union with the body, focus more on how the soul is not united to the body than on what that relationship actually consists in. This is not surprising though, for Aquinas has already answered some of these questions in previous articles. Two such views are rejected (76.6 and 7). Firstly, it is suggested that the soul and body are related by some accidental disposition of the soul’s. We know already that this must be false on account of soul being the form of the body, whose union is one of necessity for the continued existence of the human person. Aquinas explains this by appealing to the relationship between substance and accidents. Given that accidents by definition are either non-essential, such that they succeed the essence, or essential, as proper accidents, their being logically follows that of substance, and all the essential non-accidental properties existing within it. For example, a cat cannot be a tabby, unless it exists in the first place. It might be physically impossible for a tabby to continue to exist as a black cat, but such a change does not affect its ‘catness’, so is not limited by metaphysical possibility. This is not so for soul in man, as with form in substance. For substance to exist at all, substantial form must be present. Form is then responsible not only for the substance’s being, but for its essential properties and proper accidents also. The presence of the soul in a human being guarantees not only his existence simpliciter, but also as an animal, a person, and having a body, which precede his non-essential properties. Soul as substantial form, thus, precedes accidents, and therefore, its union with the body cannot be accidental.

Secondly, is the view that another body stands between the human body and the soul, for example, fire and air, as Augustine was said to believe, or else a particular kind of subtle body (perhaps breath) between the

incorporeal and the corporeal, the existence of which links the two. It is also suggested that this body be incorruptible, a kind of heavenly light. Once again, Aquinas' main objection to this idea is based on the necessary properties of soul as the form of the body, which is compared by Aristotle with the wax and its shape. By the mental act of abstraction, we can see the wax and its shape as two different elements, just like matter and form, but the wax and its shape are unified into the one substance (a lump of wax), whose separation results in the destruction or corruption of the composite. Likewise, the body cannot exist without the soul, which is the cause of its existence. The form, of its own accord, makes the thing actually exist.

As the form of the body, then, the soul has no existence apart from bodily matter while in the composite. The requirement of an intermediary as a uniting body is therefore moot. While the exact understanding of the relation between form and matter is still to be explored, it is necessary that they be one complete substance. A uniting body would be a substance in its own right, with its own form, as wax is with its shape. Aquinas argues additionally that the other two views are borne out of misunderstandings. Augustine was not speaking of the soul's relationship with the body when he said that the soul manages the body, but instead that it moves it into action. Furthermore, it is said to be true that breathing causes the union between soul and body, but as a disposition, not an intermediary. Aquinas states that breathing prepares the body for the union.

However, perhaps this raises more questions than it answers. It is expected that a soul, whose being is that of form, could not be united to the body by any accidental disposition or intermediary body. Nonetheless, the properties of form and matter, and the relationship between them suggest that while soul may be the form of the body necessarily, it is not necessarily form simpliciter. Aquinas writes:

But inasmuch as the soul is the form of the body, it has not an existence apart from the existence of the body, but by its own existence is united to the body immediately (76.7, ad. 3).

Here we see an account of soul and body such that the soul is directly united to the body, as is explained by its role as the substantial form, whereby it unifies the elements into a single substance. Furthermore, we are told that as the form of the body, soul has no existence apart from the body while it informs the body. One might ask Aquinas, therefore, whether if the soul has no existence apart from the body as the form of the body, it ceases to be the form of the body when separated, given that its incorruptibility causes its existence to transcend that of the human body. Aquinas, though, denies the possibility of the soul losing its form-hood, in accordance with its change in mode of being, and so it seems that a soul can have existence apart from the existence of the body, but only when it ceases to be the form of the body, as we shall see in the next section.

Nevertheless, no matter how we wish to view soul, there is still a puzzle as to how an incorporeal and therefore boundless soul can be located in a corporeal body of definite height and width, as Aquinas addresses in the final article of question 76. As form, it makes sense to say that the limits of the man are also the limits of the soul. While the man is alive, his soul does not transcend the time or space in which he is

presently located. Further, it is in the nature of form that it be “whole in the whole and whole in every part”, in order to perfect both the whole and each part. Perhaps this is less apparent with inanimate substances, but it follows that in order for man to be alive, all parts of his body must be living. Soul in man accounts for all his essential properties, including the very nature of being alive, which in its entirety, must therefore inform all parts of man. One must make the distinction, however, between the soul itself and its powers. Aquinas fully supports the view that the soul is wholly present wherever it is present, but he does not wish to make the same claim about the powers of the soul, which are only present where they are needed. The power of sight, for example, is not found in the ear etc.

Let us look, then, at the possible objections to this thesis. The first (76.8, arg. 2) considers how the soul, which only exists in an organic body – of which it is an act – could exist in each part, which separately is only part of an organic body. Furthermore, and by extension of the first, if the whole soul is in each part of the body, it follows that each part of the body is an animal, on account of being ensouled matter, as animal is taken to be. This latter objection, however, is built on a false premise: that an animal is simply soul and matter. This is not so. In order for something to be an animal, it must be a first substance itself, that is, a whole body, together with soul. A part is not a substance in this sense. Each part of the body, therefore, is still only a part of an animal. Additionally, each part can only be part of an animal if and only if the soul is whole in whole and whole in each part, contrary to the above interpretation. As we said, all parts of man are only alive (for example, each of his separate cells) because of the soul, which is the first principle of all life. With regards to the first objection, then, it should be noted that, although the thought implies it, it is not the case that the soul only acts on an organic body simpliciter. That is, that it does not act on anything else. Instead, the soul being the actuation of an organic body means that it only acts on an organic body “as the subject immediately ready for it” (ad. 2) or, in another translation, “as of its primary and proportionate perfectible”. To put this another way, it is not the case that the soul only acts on an organic body *per se*, but that it only acts on an organic body in this particular way, according to its function. It is the body as a whole that is acted on, or perfected first, and through the whole, the parts are acted upon also. Therefore, through the whole, the soul exists additionally in the parts of the body.

vi. *Further Issues*

This ends the discussion of the account of the union of soul and body. However, there are a number of issues still to be addressed, most of which stem from the requirement for man to be a single composite substance, while his soul (and/or intellect), though it is part of him, achieves a level of separability not obviously consistent with its nature as the form of the body. Firstly, then, in order for the soul to continue to function following separation from the body, it is necessary that at least one of its powers is able to act apart from matter, and yet it is for this reason that it is difficult to understand how a person’s intellectual activity may be said to be his own. Furthermore, there is an additional puzzle as to how to locate the intellect in the composite body. We might say that the intellect is the act of the soul, but it seems, at least as long as the person is alive, that it is really the act of man himself, whereby it changes its mode of existence (as does the

soul) between death and resurrection. However, it seems that if the intellect cannot be said to be the act of any body, neither can it be the act of any being partly composed of a body. In what sense, then, is one's intellective cognition one's own? On the other hand, to say that the power of sight is the act of the eyes is to explain how it is that the man can be said to see. How, then, can the man be said to understand, if the power of understanding is not the act anything directly relating to him? It seems that just as the power of sight is present in the eyes, but not other parts of the human being, the power of intellect is present in the immaterial soul, but not in any material part of the human being. Therefore, just as the presence of the power of sight in the eye makes the whole human being see, the presence of intellect in the soul makes the whole human being think. We should keep these ideas in mind as we turn to the next problem.

In a similar way, in order for it to exercise all necessary powers, the soul seems to require a level of subsistence over and above that which it is possible for the form of a substance to possess. We discussed earlier how the soul's act of existence is said to be the same as the person's, but not the implications this has for the soul's being the weakly subsistent form of the body. Firstly, despite the soul being part of the essence of the composite person, Aquinas also speaks specifically of the essence of the soul itself. Such a move seems to give the soul a greater level of subsistence than that associated with being a part of a whole, and yet this would call into question the human person's status as a single composite substance. It is important, therefore, that the properties of the soul are not understood in this way. Instead, we should look again at why Aquinas requires the soul to have its own essence.

This concerns the link between *essentia* and *esse*. Although they are strictly different words, essence and existence are in some ways inseparable. This is not existence in a general sense though, but what we might call existence of a certain kind, such that both existence and essence speak of the existence of a thing as a particular kind, or as Pasnau puts it, "the essence of an entity is what gives that entity its own brand of existence" (ibid, p. 154). For this reason, it seems that the soul must have its own essence, as the first principle of life. Nonetheless, it seems that this essence is essentially just what is signified by the soul's definition (29.1, ad. 4). Furthermore, there is no issue with even weakly subsistent beings having an essence in this sense; even a hand or foot has its own definition, as is required for it to have existence.

However, we have reason to believe that this is not the only sense in which the soul is considered to have its own essence. Given that the soul may be separated from the body by more than abstraction, it seems that it must have its own substance, that is, essence, in order to have independent existence in this state. As it happens, Aquinas denies this, allowing the soul to exist as something other than a first substance in its state of separation until the resurrection of the body. The discussion of the separated soul is one for later, but this goes to show how involved the discussion of the subsistence of the soul really is. Even in its separated state, Aquinas does not wish to consider the soul's separate substance. Instead, it continues to exist as a form, though with greater separability than other forms.

Finally, and as a consequence of the above, the status of man as actually one, *unum simpliciter*, is called into question. If there is any sense in which the parts of a human person, perhaps soul and intellect, are themselves considered to be complete substances, then, for Aquinas, it is not possible for man to be one composite substance. Given the role the soul plays in man though, it is hard to see how it could be a separate substance. This is the nature of form. On the other hand, the separated soul may still be form, but it is not *the form* of anything, for there does not currently exist a composite substance, that is, the human person. Again, we cannot tackle these problems until we have discussed the status of the soul before life, and after death, and the difference between soul in the composite person, and soul as the part of man that continues after the death of the body, in order to reanimate it at the appropriate time.

This ends the final article of question 76, and so the account of the union of soul and body, as is essential for the man to be one. And yet some of these ideas cannot be fully comprehended without application. We turn, then, to the existence of the human person through embryogenesis to the afterlife, in order to treat the remaining questions about the necessity of the composite.

§1.5 – The Existence of Human Persons: From Conception to the Afterlife

i. The Life of a Human Person

In this final section, we are interested not only in the ontology of human persons but also in matters such as persistence and identity through time and change. Such questions as ‘when does a human person’s life begin?’, ‘what kind of changes can a human person survive?’ and ‘what does the death of his body mean for a human person’s persistence?’ will be our focus through the following fifteen subsections. The first eight will set out Aquinas’ account of embryogenesis and discuss the cogency of his arguments in the light of both modern medicine and previously considered metaphysical thought. As such, the next section will consider the two ways in which things are said to be made: generation and corruption. Creation *ex nihilo* pertains only to the human soul, not the human person as a whole; the latter, for Aquinas, is the end product of a series of generations. These thoughts provide a big-picture view of the process, but to understand it fully, we must look at each stage in more detail. Subsections three and four will explore embryogenesis both from Aquinas’ perspective, in terms of generation and corruption, and from the viewpoint of modern medicine and human biology, which see the process as concerning the gradual development of one individual (epigenesis). Most crucially, in subsection five, we will then come to the discussion of the infusion of the created soul: the moment at which there first exists a human person in the womb. It is here that many scholars begin to find Aquinas’ conclusions difficult to accept; despite the fact that nearly every part of its matter appears to remain the same after infusion, there now exists a completely new substance. Furthermore, one is forced into the view that there is no numerical identity relation between the embryo and the foetus. These two ideas will then form the basis of the next four subsections, starting with metaphysical implications of Aquinas’ account, moving onto the question of identity, what is actually means to be ‘human’ and finally, a discussion on when human life really begins.

The remaining seven subsections, then, will concern the topic of death and the afterlife. These are as follows: the relationship between body and soul, the nature of the soul as incorruptible, the soul's mode of existence post bodily death and its functions, the human person's persistence with or without the body, the definition of survival, and bodily resurrection. This part of the final section will analyse Aquinas' account of life after death, and look afresh at some of the questions asked previously. Those concerning identity and persistence will then follow through to the discussions in subsequent chapters.

ii. *Generation versus Creation*

We have seen already that human animals differ from non-human animals most notably with regards to the nature of the intellective soul. While human souls are said to be weakly-subsistent, animal souls are not subsistent at all, but have the usual nature of form inside the composite; they cannot exist independently, and go out of existence completely upon its destruction. As well as being non-subsistent, then, animal souls are not incorruptible, but 'die' with the animal. According to Robert Pasnau (2002), Aquinas' account of soul identifies humans as having a hybrid nature (p.100)³⁹. Unlike animals, which are entirely the product of natural processes, man's production is only partly natural, the rest spiritual. As reflected in its nature, the intellective soul is infused by God at the point when the embryo/foetus is advanced enough to be potentially rational. This is Aquinas' view on when human life begins. Not only is the foetus a human *when* it becomes intellectually ensouled, but *because* it does. The intellective soul is the human substantial form, where intellective ensoulment is the coming to be of a human being.

In order to explain this, we need to say something more about the way living beings develop from conception. More generally, hylomorphism is explained by the concept of generation. Unlike creation, which implies existence *ex nihilo* (*creatio ex nihilo*), with generation, there must be something there to start with. Just as a generator converts mechanical energy to electrical energy, nature converts one sort of living being into another.⁴⁰ Creation is only really discussed by Aquinas in terms of the existence of the universe, but not even generation can explain the changes in form and matter individually. Neither form nor matter is ever generated. Instead, form exists potentially in matter, such that changes in matter bring about new forms. Generation, therefore, occurs at the level of composite being, and with humans and animals, the living being as a whole, not just the body or soul. Although changes occur in the matter, as a result of the development and growth of the embryo, this is only the explanation or material cause of generation; it is not generation itself. For Aquinas, as the physical composition of the embryo undergoes change, new forms that previously existed potentially in matter come to be. This is because, as first explained by Aristotle, the generation of a composite being requires material out of which it is generated, a form to take on and an agent to bring about the change.

³⁹ *ibid*

⁴⁰ Debate surrounding identity claims about the second substance are many here, but we shall return to them later.

The discussion of generation as pertaining to the first stages of foetal development mostly takes place in the second book of the *Summa Contra Gentiles*. Although written predominantly as a theological text, the *SCG* is no less full of philosophical insights than the *Summa*, and provides greater detail on the arguments surrounding the matter of when human life begins. I refer, therefore, to both texts when discussing conception in the light of scholastic animalism. But first, a few preliminary thoughts. When applying Aquinas' account of human persons to concepts such as conception and life after death, one must not only consider the cogency of the philosophical implications, but also those of a scientific nature. It may be that while scholastic animalism can provide a logical and cogent account of the existence of human beings, it cannot be squared with tested scientific principles. A good account should do both. For this reason, I shall be comparing and contrasting Aquinas' account of embryogenesis with modern biology as we proceed.

iii. *Conception and Early Development*

Let us turn first then to the Thomistic account of conception, as a continuation from what we have already discussed about soul and body in the composite human person. With regards to the Aristotelian definition of generation, Aquinas holds that for conception, the material is provided by the mother, in the form of the ovum, and the agent is the father, who provides the sperm. It is not the sperm itself that is the agent, however, but a formative power (*virtus formativa*) within it. Neither is the *virtus formativa* a soul, for then the sperm itself would be a living organism long before conception.

Additionally, and for a similar reason, the *virtus formativa* cannot produce the soul in the human embryo. Instead, its purpose is to direct its development towards completion. At the point of conception, the fertilised ovum receives its first form by the *virtus formativa*, the formative power, which is contained in the semen, and which remains the same despite the changes that the embryo undergoes, from the start of the formation to the end (*SCG*, 2.89). This seems like a strange thing for Aquinas to say, given that the original substance does not survive the introduction of a new form, but with the role of the formative power as something of a blueprint for the completed human being, he does require it to exist in at least an explanatory sense. It seems that the role of the formative power is somewhat like the DNA of the gametes in a fertilised ovum, but without existing as a part of each individual cell. Nonetheless, for Aquinas, powers are usually thought of as accidents, which cannot move from subject to subject in this manner, so it seems hard to see how the formative power could, unless it is a substantial form, as seems unlikely. Instead, Aquinas describes the *virtus formativa* as not actually existing in the soul (or an animal), but existing in the soul (or an animal) virtually, rather like the form of a house in the mind of the builder (*Commentary on the Metaphysics*, VII.8.1456), which now requires that a power has powers itself, or at least virtually. Furthermore, this explanation leaves a number of other questions unanswered. The most troubling one concerns how the formative power is able to direct the development of the human person when it is contained in the sperm, which ceases to exist following the fertilisation of the ovum.

One might think, therefore, that Aquinas should want to treat the *virtus formativa* as though an entirely new substance is always the result of generation and corruption, but this is not so. As the matter of the embryo changes with the growing complexity of its development, the current being takes on new forms, each suited to its present capacities and potentialities. Presumably, then, thus far, the development of the embryo for a human being is no different than for any other viviparous⁴¹ animal. At each stage, the existing creature is corrupted and replaced by a more complex living being, each characterised by a different form. This is where the similarities end, however. The final stages of a non-human animal's development follow the generation of a being with a sensitive soul (from more primitive forms), until gestation is over and the creature is born. For a human person, on the other hand, the final soul is not a product of generation, but of creation and, therefore, not just the result of nature.

Returning to the second book of the *SCG*, we find a discussion on the creation of the human soul. In the usual manner, Aquinas demonstrates that the human soul must be created, not as a product of generation, by explaining why the semen could not transmit it, and why the *virtus formativa* could not bring about its creation either. We have considered already how no soul could be contained within the sperm, but what is not denied is that the vegetative and sensitive souls come into existence as a result of the semen. Given what we have discussed about the powers of the soul, however, this should not surprise us. All vegetative and sensitive powers are the act of some body, and therefore need only specific working organs to function. Conversely, the intellect, or intellectual power, acts only through the soul, and not through the body, or indeed any body. It cannot be the case, therefore, that the development of the embryo (as a result of the *virtus formativa*) is enough to bring it into existence. Aquinas discusses a number of problems with this thesis, but we shall suffice it to say – in accordance with what was considered regarding the nature of the intellect – that the human soul is not the product of generation.

The only alternative, then, is that the human soul is in fact created on an individual basis, at some point after the sensitive soul comes into being. Two implications should be noted from this. Firstly, that the human soul cannot be said to exist at conception⁴² (assuming that infusion cannot happen then, as Aquinas states) or at any point up to infusion, rendering the prior stages of the embryo⁴³ as *human* (adjective), but not *a human* (noun). Secondly, since a creature with a sensitive soul is purely animal and not rational, not until the intellective soul is created can there be more than the potential for a human being to exist. Some would argue that, given the embryo's genetic code (or *virtus formativa*), it is a human at conception, whether or not it can be said to be alive in its own right (as an individual, living organism) at this point. Perhaps this move is in aid of showing that abortion is wrong at any stage, but it is neither necessary to accomplish this, nor the best interpretation of what has been said already. Indeed, Aquinas is well known for his view that abortion is a

⁴¹ It is anticipated that the process must differ for creatures reproducing by other means, that is, not by giving birth to live young

⁴² In the usual sense of the fertilisation of the ovum

⁴³ Or strictly the zygote at this stage

violation of the natural law⁴⁴, whether the embryo has a soul or not. It is sufficient to ground the view that abortion is wrong at any stage after conception, that the embryo-stages will undergo corruption and generation to the point of completion, as would be the case without interruption, provided the embryo is healthy, without the aborted creature being actually human. There is no difference then, on this view, between preventing the fertilised ovum from implanting (say, using the morning-after pill) and destroying the 8-week-old foetus in the womb; both are morally reprehensible. However, there will be the added charge of murder once the foetus has surpassed soul infusion, given that it is now a human being. Probably, Aquinas would even regard the latter case just as much an example of infanticide as killing the newly-born baby.

To clarify, at conception, the sperm fertilises the ovum with a formative power to begin the first stages of development. At this point, the zygote becomes informed. It is said in the discussion of creation in the *QDP* that this first form is the semen, which will be set aside for another form to be induced (3.9 ad. 9). These comments are fairly vague, but we are given to understand that each form's complexity is in accordance with that of the embryo. A discussion of the requirements for life is outside the scope of this research, but we know that, according to Thomistic hylomorphism that the zygote would be a separate substance. Additionally, given that plants have their own life (independent of the whole), the embryo with a vegetative soul is just as much alive as a plant, with the potential to give way to a new and more advanced kind of living being. Scientifically-speaking, a single cell is alive (according to the life processes of living things), but its life is dependent on the composite, so it cannot be said to have its own life. That is to say, for living organisms, the first principle of life is the soul, while for a single living cell, the nucleus is responsible for its living processes, but without the whole composite animal, it would not be alive. When a living organism dies, it can take from hours to days for all its cells to die with it, but they will eventually, if left to naturally decay, because their first principle of life has ceased. In terms of embryogenesis, it is very hard to say at what point we would consider the zygote/embryo to be a single living organism, able to sustain life independently, and not just a part of the mother, as say the ova are a part of her, but for Aquinas, this must be roughly at the point when the vegetative soul is infused, and the embryo has the life of a plant.

Nonetheless, modern medicine can give us clues as to when some of the stages might take place. Firstly, it is not in the nature of a plant to be able to duplicate or even divide itself to create two identical plants, though external influence can achieve this in some cases. A plant, like an animal, is typically a single living organism. Likewise, once the embryo has reached plant-hood, there can be no chance of its dividing to become twins, triplets etc. This, however, is still a possibility up to implantation, at around day 14. It seems, then, that the first soul is not infused until the existing zygote has completed cell division, or in Aquinas' terminology, the first stages of development. Secondly, it is possible to detect a heartbeat at foetal age five weeks (seven weeks gestation), and sometimes even earlier. It is presumably at this point then, that the embryo has a sensitive soul, giving it a life equivalent to a non-human animal. Brain activity can sometimes

⁴⁴ This is part of his general theory of natural law (ST II.I), as well as comments regarding the concept of murder (II.II.153).

be found a few weeks later, but it is unlikely that the brain will be sufficiently developed for rational capacity until most of its structure has been formed. Medically, it is at eight weeks gestation that the embryo is first called a foetus, and typically regarded as human, but it is unlikely for Aquinas that the foetus has passed the animal stage at this point, given the developmental requirements for the infusion of the intellectual soul.

As far as scholastic animalism goes, then, the embryo is not properly called a human animal, and is therefore not a person. Aquinas writes: “It belongs to every man to be a person, inasmuch as everything subsisting in human nature is a person”. (IIIa, 16.12 ad. 1). A human animal/person necessarily has an intellectual nature on account of its intellectual soul, and yet an embryo pre-ensoulment⁴⁵ has no such nature. It is still very much a violation of the natural law to kill such a being, as we said above, but purely in terms of substance ontology, such a creature is no more a human than any other animal; there is merely the potential for one to exist, as there would be moments before conception. As Pasnau (ibid) correctly states, Tertullian (150-225) was mistaken when he claimed that being potentially human just is being human – at least as far as metaphysics goes; to say that something is potentially *x* is to say that it is not *x*, but that it could be (p. 121). This cannot apply to the zygote, embryo etc. though for it will never become a human being. We can only ever say that what exists in the mother’s womb (non-rigid designator) is potentially human (if healthy), but not that the embryo is potentially human, for the embryo will never become human. Furthermore, the foetus⁴⁶ is not potentially human either. Instead, it is human and has never been not human. More correctly, then, nothing is potentially human; it either is or it is not and never will be.

iv. Epigenesis and Aquinas

It should be noted that Aquinas’ theory of embryogenesis is not far from what we now understand to be the correct interpretation of these events: a process called epigenesis. Instead of becoming a fully developed human at the start and merely growing bigger over the next nine months, as some used to believe, the embryo starts life as a zygote, which undergoes mitosis in its cells to become a more complex structure. Once embedded in the uterine lining, it then starts to develop organs, by addition of cells, growing in complexity until birth. Such knowledge of embryogenesis was unknown to Aquinas at the time, but his theory of forms has a very similar pattern.

At the start of epigenesis, the human embryo is said to have a vegetative soul in accordance with its comparatively simple structure. Metaphysically, we may now refer to the matter of the embryo as a body, but scientifically this may be contested, depending on whether something can be a body without having any organs. Unlike with the human animal post birth, the body of the embryo now goes through significant changes, which cannot merely be categorised as growth. To take a biological example, the embryonic stage, lasting about eight weeks, takes the embryo from implantation to the point where it is properly called a

⁴⁵ Ensoulment always refers to the infusion of the intellectual soul

⁴⁶ In the sense of the being following the infusion of the intellectual soul

foetus, having the full structure of a human being. Aquinas' interpretation of this describes a process of actualising and then replacing forms in accordance with the complexity of the embryo/foetus. He writes:

[...] in the generation of an animal various substantial forms appear: first the semen, then blood and so on until we find the form of [...] a man. Consequently this kind of generation is not simple, but consists of a series of generations and corruptions: for it is not possible, as we have proved above, that one and the same substantial form be educed into act by degrees. Thus, then, by the formative force that is in the semen from the beginning, the form of the semen is set aside and another form induced, and when this has been set aside yet another comes on the scene, and thus the vegetal form makes its first appearance: and this being set aside a soul both vegetal and sensitive is induced; and this being set aside a soul at once vegetal, sensitive and rational is induced, not by the aforesaid force but by the Creator (QDP 3.9 ad. 9).

This is the full description given for the process of generation and corruption of form in the embryo. It is certainly implied that at least two forms prior to the vegetative soul exist in the embryo, but it is unknown whether there are sub-forms between the vegetative soul and the sensitive, neither fully one nor the other. Perhaps the vegetative soul takes on some extra properties associated with the sensitive soul, but not yet a complete version of this soul.

In terms of discussing the philosophical cogency of the Thomistic metaphysics of embryogenesis, however, we need not know how many forms are generated and then corrupted. It is the ontology of substance with regards to the embryo that concerns us here. As discussed previously, substances are defined by their form. If the form changes, then one has no choice but to say that the resulting substance (or perhaps quasi-substance⁴⁷) is not the same one that was there previously, though as the previous one no longer exists in the case of generation, there is some continuity between them. It is implied, therefore, that generation causes the destruction or at least corruption of a substance before a new one comes in its place. Its matter undergoes a number of significant changes, as it grows in complexity, and with the generation of each new form, it 'becomes' a new substance. However, only the form is actually directly destroyed. The process of generation for the embryo is not altogether different from that of a caterpillar becoming a butterfly via a chrysalis. Clearly, we want to say that such changes are significant enough to be considered evidence for a change of form, but it is generally believed to be one and the same creature that was a caterpillar, turned into a chrysalis and became a butterfly. Technically, then, the butterfly is not qualitatively identical to either the chrysalis or the caterpillar, and yet if butterflies could be said to have any sort of consciousness⁴⁸, that would be continuous. Applying this analogy to embryogenesis, we can say that the life of the embryo continues despite the changes in its form and therefore substance. Both its life and its matter then have continuity. Surely, then, since the life of the embryo continued from the generation of the vegetatively-ensouled being

⁴⁷ Aquinas' account of generation and corruption generally allows the existence of intermediate beings, but not true substances, given that they are not complete in species.

⁴⁸ Under a Lockean interpretation. Same consciousness ties two potentially different substances

onwards, we cannot very well say that it is not the same substance existing first with a vegetative soul, then a sensitive soul, and finally an intellective soul.

However, according to Thomistic generation, the corruption of one thing and the generation of another, result in the conclusion that *this* foetus was never *that* embryo. Similarly, under the same interpretation, we would have to say that this butterfly was not that caterpillar, which seems like nonsense. Nonetheless, it is at this point that the analogy with caterpillars and butterflies breaks down. For Aquinas, the substances existing at the different stages of generation are not actually true substances. Instead, he regards them as incomplete substances, or intermediaries, without complete species, prior to the creation of the human person at the point of soul infusion. These intermediaries are not products of chance, though, but of nature – deliberate stages in the generation of a living being. Embryogenesis, therefore, is not the corruption of one substance by the generation of the next, but of one intermediary. The intermediaries are said to go out of existence once that stage has passed, but the new form is composed of all the properties of the first in addition to new ones. We might compare the going out of existence of the embryo before the creation of the rational soul with that of the caterpillar before becoming a chrysalis. Both are said to go out of existence following a significant change to at least their accidental properties. Unlike the human person and the embryo though, the butterfly can be said to be the caterpillar. This may not be the best analogy therefore, for even if intermediaries are being corrupted and generated, and not actual substances, there is still no sense in which *this* foetus can ever have been *that* embryo.

It is enough of a problem that there ever was a different substance from the one that comes to be born, however. Despite the notion of intermediaries, there is still the fact that the souls of plants and non-human animals are substantial forms, and so there remain at least three different substances existing in the mother's womb between conception and birth: a plant, an animal, and a human being. As such, thus far, there seems to be no way to argue against the view that they are not all one and the same numerical being. Let us turn, then, to the infusion of the intellective soul in the hope of answering some of these difficulties.

v. *The Infusion of the Human Soul*

Just before the intellective soul is infused, the embryo intermediary has the soul – and therefore capacities – of a non-human animal, that is, a sensitive soul. It is hard to see how something with matter and form could be an incomplete substance, but it is important for generation that it is. Perhaps the key to understanding this is in Aquinas' claim that these intermediaries do not have a complete species (or lack specific completeness), but are on the way towards that end (*SCG* II.89, 10). All true substances must have a specific kind, without which they would be incomplete. It is hard to even define a form without knowing its specific kind. This would then explain why it is hard to say exactly what kind of being exists from zygote to foetus⁴⁹.

⁴⁹ Although typically used to refer to the unborn child from eight weeks gestation, I am using the term 'foetus' to differentiate the complete human person (post soul-infusion) from the incomplete embryo. This may very well not

As mentioned above, nature is now interrupted by the spiritual, as the intellectual soul is created, or in Aquinas' terminology "introduced from without", unlike the previous souls which existed in virtue of the semen (*SCG* II.89, 11). The exact day of infusion is heavily debated among scholars⁵⁰, but certain criteria must be satisfied before the body can support the human soul. Firstly, as discussed in the previous section, the bodily matter itself must be sufficient. The human soul can only belong to a living, organic body with the capacity for rational thought and sensitivity. Exactly what is meant by the capacity for rational thought is a matter for later, but it is apparent that a body of insufficient complexity could not support this kind of soul. Additionally, the body must already be informed by a sensitive soul, with all the capacities for non-human animal existence. The sensitive soul will then be replaced by the intellectual soul. This is essential to the Thomistic hylomorphic theory of substance; no being can have more than one substantial form. The intellectual soul is the one and only substantial form in man (both at infusion and after birth). When infused, therefore, the sensitive soul is said to cease to exist, and a new complete substance emerges, numerically distinct from the old one.

vi. *Metaphysical Implications: The Relationship between Embryo and Foetus*

Nonetheless, the idea that this foetus was never that embryo seems metaphysically troubling. Perhaps this is based on the idea that something seems to be given its numerical identity by its ultimate matter and not its form. For example, the same basic matter exists between the stages of caterpillar and butterfly, though there is a certain amount of rearranging of molecules. It can hardly be said that the butterfly was brought into existence in some way. Neither would we want to say that that butterfly did not start its life as this caterpillar. A similar process must occur in the embryo, whether its stages appear to be intermediaries or not. The portion of matter existing at the pre-infusion stage and a moment after it must be numerically identical. There is nothing to suggest that the intellectual soul changes the matter in any way; it merely causes the matter belonging to the pre-infusion embryo to become the matter belonging to the foetus. Why, then, does Aquinas want to claim that a new substance has come into being, whose life started at the point of the corruption of the previous species, and not with the life of the first? And how can the embryo cease to exist when all its matter continues? It seems more plausible to say that the embryo that was there earlier is the foetus that is there now, even though the being that previously existed was not a foetus (where foetus is a phase-sortal for an organism). The material composition has remained the same, and it is hard to say that its life has not continued and, therefore, this is the same organism. Let us return to the theory then to see why it is that Aquinas says the foetus is never the embryo.

match up with medical concepts, but is metaphysically beneficial for determining the identity of the different substances. For example, this man was that foetus, but was never that embryo.

⁵⁰ Aquinas references Aristotle's *History of Animals* in his *Commentary on the Book of Sentences* (III.3, 5, a. 2, Responsio), where it is claimed that the human soul is infused at 40 days for males and 90 days for females. This is not mentioned in his account of embryogenesis though, and seems not to be his firm belief.

Firstly, one must question what is meant by the material composition. Is it actually the whole matter that is unchanged? It is quickly apparent that this is not the case. We have seen already that upon the infusion of the intellectual soul, the previous substantial form – the sensitive soul – is replaced, creating a new being. As the substantial form, however, the sensitive soul has a far greater role than just making it possible for the embryo's potential powers to be actualised; it also configures its whole composition. Without the sensitive soul, the embryo is nothing more than prime matter. As the intellectual soul is introduced from without, however, it is once again configured, firstly as it was before, in terms of its size, shape and colour, and then with its higher order potentialities, for example, intellect and will. What, then, we must ask, remains from the embryo now that the foetus stands in its place? For Aquinas, nothing more than its prime matter. Given that it has no properties, prime matter cannot define anything. Therefore, an entirely new substance has been created at the point of infusion, and the embryo is no more. It is in this sense that Aquinas denies the identity of the foetus with the embryo.

Clearly, this is highly counterintuitive though. Not only does Aquinas' account leave us with the conclusion that an entirely new substance has come into existence, replacing the previous one, but that all the properties and parts of that new substance must also be new. At the point of infusion, the foetus has a new body, new organs, new cells, and even a new colour and a new shape; substantially-speaking, the foetus has no connection with the embryo. They are numerically different substances. Even more difficult to accept is that the very configuration required for the possibility of soul-infusion is then corrupted at the point when God creates the intellectual soul. In order to demonstrate this peculiarity, we might compare the development of the foetus to the building of a house⁵¹, which is constructed up to the point when the roof is added. At this point, the roof comes together with new walls (numerically distinct from the old ones) to make the house. The intellectual soul, likewise, is required to complete the human being; it does so by destroying that which it was created to complete. This seems, on the face of it, unbelievable, for all that remains for Aquinas is prime matter.

At this point then, it seems that one must choose between denying that the embryo and foetus are numerically identical, which would result in the view that substantial forms can be accidental, and thus rejecting the hylomorphic account of substance, *and* questioning the reconstitution thesis. Let us first consider the implications of a re-working of the account for generation and corruption. Instead of holding to the view that only prime matter remains of the embryo at the point when the human soul is infused, perhaps one could say instead that some of the informed matter remains through substantial change, or perhaps even the whole material composition. Not only would this better answer the identity question – by making it more plausible that the foetus and the embryo are numerically identical – but it would also make it possible to deny the apparent worthless notion of the human soul destroying that which it came to perfect.

⁵¹ Pereira da Silva, J. F. (2014)

However, in order for the embryo to gain a new substantial form, the old one must be replaced, in the same way that the embryo itself is replaced by the foetus. If this were not so then the new creature would have two substantial forms, which is not possible according to the unicity thesis, as underpins the whole of the Aquinas' hylomorphic metaphysics. Each being has one substantial form, which stands for all its essential properties, coding for the type of being it is. Logically, then, in order to gain a new substantial form, the being's essential properties cannot remain. Nonetheless, if one were to study the embryo in the womb just before and up to the foetal stage, he would observe very little in the way of changes in its accidental properties. Aquinas' response to this would include an explanation for how these properties have not remained, but have been replaced by properties qualitatively identical, though not numerically identical. If we consider the foetus' shape, for example, we must say that the shape before infusion and after are not the same shape; they just qualitatively identical. In the same way, the pre-infusion and post-infusion heart of the embryo/foetus cannot be more than qualitatively identical, so this goes for the parts of the being as well as its properties.

In *Quaestiones Quodlibetales*, Aquinas discusses briefly the very question of what becomes of the existing forms at infusion. As one would expect from what has been said already, it is not a matter of logic that prevents the above move, but a contingent fact. He writes:

The accidental forms which inhered before and prepared for the soul are not indeed destroyed essentially but accidentally when the subject is destroyed (QD I, Q4. co.).

The reasons for this seem firstly to be on account of the role of the substantial form and, secondly, regarding the nature of the accidental forms, which do not strictly- and properly-speaking have an essence. Substantial forms, as perfect forms, always replace the imperfect. This explains the removal of the prior form (the sensitive soul). Concerning the accidental forms, though, they are not lost because they are imperfect, but because they belong to a subject, which – on account of the corruption of its substantial form – no longer exists. The sensitive soul, therefore, goes out of existence, taking its accidental forms with it. The intellective soul then replaces it, “containing in itself virtually something of the more imperfect forms” (*ibid* ad. 1). This explains what was said earlier about how it is that the intellective soul contains all the powers of the lesser souls but not those souls themselves. Perhaps this can account for how it is that the accidental forms disappear, following perfection by the human soul, and yet the foetus remains qualitatively the same.

Nonetheless, this leaves us wanting to say that the material substance remains the same while its accidental and substantial forms are generated and corrupted, and such a view is not open to Aquinas. Yet it is more than difficult to motivate an account of embryology that actually argues for the complete destruction of the physical substance that is the embryo, in place of a completely new substance – the foetus, and yet, on one level, that is Aquinas' position. If a substance is defined by its substantial form, then the corruption of one substantial form by the replacement of another would create a new substance. Furthermore, the introduction

of a new form results in accidental forms specifically but not numerically the same as the previous ones. On the other hand, at the physical level, nothing is actually destroyed or even reconstituted. How could it be? The embryo continues to develop singularly, now as a foetus, and lives the life instead of a human being rather than an animal.

But what does this say for the identity thesis? For Aquinas, the foetus cannot be said to have the same essential properties as the embryo, and yet it seems to be a mistake to say that they are not numerically identical. Clearly, they occupy exactly the same space, and share nearly a hundred percent of their atoms. If this were not so, then there would be another being in the womb with the foetus. The other thing the two beings have in common is the same life, another generally accepted principle that Aquinas must deny. A pre-infusion embryo has the physiological capacities of a non-human animal, and is therefore alive in the same sense. Seeing as it does not die prior to infusion, it must be the same life in the foetus that was in the embryo, just as the same life in the caterpillar will be in the butterfly. The embryo is said to have an animal life, while the foetus has a human life, but there is no reason to suggest from this that it is not one and the same life. For example, a human first lives the life of a baby, then a toddler, then a child, and finally an adult, but at no point does one life end and another begin. It is merely categorised differently according to the stage of development. Similarly, foetal is a later stage of the development of the same organism than embryonic. On the other hand, for Aquinas, the two cases are not equivalent. While baby, toddler, and child are phase sortals, not substantial kinds, the same is apparently not true of embryo and foetus, or rather person, given that foetus is not really a substantial kind; it just names the stage from the beginning of human life to birth.

The questions that concern us most though are that of whether there is enough evidence for continuing life, starting at early-term embryo-hood, in order to ground an identity thesis, and if not, how necessary this is to the cogency of the account. If, for example, human life – that is, the life of the person, and therefore the human animal – begins at infusion, this may make the Thomistic theory of embryogenesis hard to accept, but it will not necessarily put pressure on the general principle of scholastic animalism, whereby ‘human animal’ and ‘human person’ has the same extension, because it is still the case that human beings and human persons begin at the same moment. What is up for debate is that of which moment that is. The problem comes about if it can be shown that a human animal actually exists before it is possible for the intellective soul to be infused. Such an account would therefore have to deny that rationality is a necessary property of human animality.

So, when is that moment of first existence? The simple answer seems to be at the point when the intellective soul is infused, which, in turn, is when the body and brain are sufficiently developed for the capacities of the soul to be potentially exercised.

vii. *Modern Medicine and Identity*

This change in the substantial form of the embryo not only supplies it with the relevant properties associated with a being of an intellectual nature, but also makes it a human animal, and therefore a person. One might question whether the pre-infusion embryo is not after all subsisting in human nature, given that it contains the genetic information for a human being, but Aquinas requires a being to have a human soul, without which it cannot be said to have a human nature.

It must, therefore, be the case that, for Aquinas', there is human life not at conception but at infusion, or at least no earlier. Furthermore, the human foetus can only be said to be indirectly a product of conception, for the being created by the act of the semen goes out of existence before the foetus comes to be. Again, this may be a problem for the general theory, but it poses no issue for the identity of human animals with human persons. On the other hand, it does leave a number of questions unanswered. Most of these relate to the scientific accuracy of the account, which we will come onto shortly, but there is also a metaphysical matter concerning the type of change going on in the womb. Previously, we considered that the replacement of the sensitive soul by the intellective is accounted for by substantial change, but this does not mean the change happens instantly. In fact, it makes more sense if it does not, for otherwise, the sensitive soul would immediately go out of existence and full human life would begin at a specific moment. This is not how we understand the development of an embryo, which is so gradual that it is impossible to pinpoint exactly when particular changes take place. Over time, the cells begin to divide and duplicate and the organs start to develop and increase in complexity, a process that takes around thirty-eight weeks, if we exclude the continuing development the infant experiences from birth (arguably to the end of its life). Even so, nothing happens instantly, at least, not at the macro level. Even implantation happens over several days. Perhaps, then, we might liken the process of infusion to that of a bone marrow transplant. Although the introduction of the bone marrow to the body is a fairly quick procedure, it can take up to twenty-eight days for the engraftment process to complete. Similarly, it may be possible for the intellective soul to begin to enter the body of the embryo, but not complete infusion for a number of days or even weeks. Then, as the intellective soul comes into existence, the sensitive soul goes out of existence, giving time for the former to take over the actions of the latter.

The idea of soul infusion having similarities with engraftment does perhaps make better sense of the facts, but it is not something that Aquinas would want to entertain, nor is it open to him under an account of substantial form as binary. For Aquinas then, the foetus either has a non-human animal soul or a human soul; it is not able to possess a portion of one and a portion of the other. It is assumed, therefore, that when God infuses the intellective soul, he does it instantaneously. As a result, it is much more difficult to explain how it could be that the life of the human person began before this point.

Furthermore, there are additional issues here with the cogency of this account for modern day science. Firstly, while it may be argued that the semen contains the coding (or at least some of it) for the embryo's

initial development, not only does this account leave out the role of the ovum in the process, but it fails to take into account the genetic coding for a human being present from the moment of conception. Final DNA is determined by the dividing of cells and mutations that occur throughout the early stages of gestation, but even the DNA present at conception codes for a human being and not just an animal. It cannot be the case, therefore, that the pre-infusion embryo is of the same substance as an embryo from a non-human animal at the same stage. If nothing else, it has an internal potential towards humanity, and yet something in addition clearly exists from the earliest point, namely, the human genome. Aquinas recognises that something exists within the semen at least with the coding for the next stages of development – the *virtus formativa* – but the most he can say is that the coding is specific enough to indicate the potential to give way to a being that will give way to a being etc. that will give way to a human being. We know from biology that no other similar creature has the same number of chromosomes as the human animal, and that these chromosomes can be identified as human from the earliest point. DNA testing of the embryo during IVF demonstrates this. How then, can we say that the pre-infusion embryo is not in some sense human? We may perhaps be justified in saying that it lives the life of an animal, but in no sense is it actually an animal. A true animal embryo does not even have the potential to give way to a more advanced being; it is already the final substance in the chain of development. Furthermore, the *virtus formativa* in the animal's sperm must be of a different kind from that in a human's sperm, such that it can only direct the development of the creature to completion according to its kind. Really, then, what we have prior to infusion is not an animal embryo, contra Aquinas, but an incomplete human.

viii. *Partially Human and Totally Human*

Let us look further at this notion of incomplete humanity to see if speaking in these terms causes fewer problems than are found with the account of the pre-infusion foetus as a non-human animal, despite its genetic coding. Firstly, at the metaphysical level, unless one were to do away with substantial forms, it is necessary to consider how a being could be incomplete in species, that is, partly but not wholly human. As we discussed, concerning generation and corruption, Aquinas' account is open to the idea that between substantial kinds there exist intermediaries of no particular species. Nonetheless, the idea of an embryo possessing a vegetative or sensitive soul that is not a substantial form is not an option for Aquinas, as indeed it would if plant and animal are not substantial kinds in the process from conception to infusion. It seems, then, that unless one can deny the existence of vegetative and sensitive souls prior to the intellectual soul, he is not justified in saying that 'zygote' and 'human foetus' are the only two substantial kinds existing in the womb from conception to birth; there must still be one equivalent to the types of being possessing a vegetative soul, a sensitive soul, and an intellectual soul. Though in the case of the zygote, as opposed to the embryo and the foetus, there might be more to be said for – and some contemporary metaphysicians would say there is more to be said for – the idea of a human-being-predecessor that gives way to something else. Given that only animals possess a sensitive soul, though, how can it be that the pre-infusion embryo is not an animal? Perhaps this is too clear cut. Instead, it seems Aquinas would rather say that the pre-infusion embryo

possesses an animal-like soul, which is not the same as the soul possessed by an actual animal. The most we can say, then, is that there is the potential for a human to exist from the point of conception.

One should note, though, that there is a difference between being *a* human and being human. In the latter case, 'human' is being used as a property that is predicated of a specific noun. In the former, 'human' refers to a specific type of being, in this case, a member of the species *Homo sapiens*. It is the former that concerns us here. The notion of being human relies on the original state of being of no other kind, that is, not simian⁵² feline, ovine etc. Whether actually *a* human or not, a human zygote is human. The same can be said of a body, an organ and a sperm cell. These are said to be 'of a human being' and are therefore 'human'. It seems therefore that the debate in hand concerns to what extent the human embryo/foetus can be called 'a human', that is, a human animal.

But this brings us to a new issue: that of predication. We originally defined a human animal as 'an animal that is human'. However, Aquinas regards the embryo as being neither a human nor having a human nature, and so the embryo seems to be both a human animal (under the original definition) and not a human (in terms of species). Human animal and *Homo sapiens* now have distinct intensions. 'Human animal' applies to all beings that are animals (noun) and human (adjective), while '*Homo sapiens*' is applied to all creatures with a human nature, that are of the species 'human being'. This in an unusual case though, for we now require human animals to be both humans and animals, but it is important to make this clear, for we will likely have the same issue with the end of life as the beginning. Dead humans are not really animals at all, but the body retains the property of being human.

One might expect a similar problem with the notion of a 'human person', which was defined as a person that is human, but this case is actually less troubling. If no person exists until infusion, then by this point it is already human, on account of it being the embryo of a human animal. At no point, then, would it be a person and not human, at least not before the afterlife, but we shall return to this idea later.

Regarding the embryo, then, given that the requirements for human animality are the same as human personhood, and given that personhood requires the actual and not merely potential possession of a mind, for Aquinas, it has little claim to be called a human prior to soul infusion. Human persons necessarily subsist in an intellective nature. The level of subsistence required here is that of being a separate substance. For Aquinas, at the moment of conception, the zygote exists with a vegetative soul, giving it that level of subsistence to be a separate substance. However, to subsist in an intellective nature requires the potential to be present for rational thought, and in turn, the need for an intellective soul. Neither the zygote nor the embryo can be said to attain human personhood, therefore, and instead exist as non-human persons/animals,

⁵² Definition sometimes includes humans, but is generally used to refer to monkeys and apes

with the *virtus formativa* for human life. It is only in this sense can there be said to be the potential for a human person.

ix. *The Beginning of Human Life*

For Aquinas, then, human life begins at the point of infusion, as, despite there being something human there from conception, namely a human zygote, nothing can live the life of a human unless it is one. The real debate though concerns at what point the human soul comes into being. Aquinas is very clear that the soul is created by God when it is infused, but many of his contemporaries argue not only for the view that human life begins at conception, but even for the soul's existence at the creation of the world. The matter of the intellectual soul's existence at conception is taken up in detail by Robert Pasnau (pp. 115-6), so I shall not spend much time on it here. He highlights how the view seems to rely on a rather Cartesian conception of soul, which Aquinas denies, according to which the soul is seen as an independent substance, not united to the body, and each person is therefore identical to his soul. If this were not the case, there would be an unanswered question about the sense in which a bunch of cells can be considered a human being, when it has no body, and arguably has no life of its own life at this stage. Pasnau sees this as a natural consequence of the conception viewpoint, or at least the only way to view it as plausible. However, neither the view that life begins at conception, nor that the soul exists at the creation of the world is consistent withhylomorphism, which sees the soul as weakly subsistent at best, and the human person to be the composite substance, both body and soul. Additionally, for Aquinas, souls cannot exist without being hosted by human bodies, or having hosted human bodies.

Nevertheless, it does depend on how one views human life. In one sense, human life in general does exist from conception, as that is when the human embryo first begins. On this view, one could say that human life begins before the creation of the soul. On the other hand, if human life is the life lived by a human, then it must be coincident with the creation of the human soul, on the grounds that having a human soul is essential to being human. Furthermore, the human soul is not only necessary for a particular being to be a human person, but to actually live a human life; soulless beings cannot be alive. But even so, the view that the human life, and therefore the human soul, exists from conception, or even predates it, is not uncommon, and stems from the denial that an organised human body is necessary for human existence, as contradicts the scholastic animalist position. This Aquinas addresses over an article in *De Potentia* in his discussion about whether or not the soul is created inside the body. I turn to this now in order to see why the conception view ought to be dismissed. He presents four arguments to the contrary. The first three have to do with the soul's nature as form, while the final one questions how its purpose is affected by when and how it was created.

Firstly, then, he argues as follows:

P1) All things created are created perfect⁵³

⁵³ Taken here to mean complete

P2) The soul is not perfect unless joined to a body, of which it is the efficient cause

C) The soul cannot have been created before the body

Given the properties of form according to hylomorphism, P2 cannot but be true, but the conclusion can only be drawn if P1 is also true, and this seems unlikely. The Bible teaches that all things were made for God's pleasure, and God himself calls creation "very good", but this is not the same as perfection, and neither does it entail completion. Souls need bodies to be complete, but it is not a contradiction to say that God is able to create things in an incomplete form. Given the possibility of sin, death and disease in the world from creation, it is hard to say that it was made perfect, unless for Aquinas the universal quantifier in P1 is restricted in some sense, though it is not clear how. Nonetheless, the question of God's purpose in creating souls does give merit to the argument that some sort of contradiction exists whereby souls are created outside bodies. This we shall return to shortly.

Secondly, again given the nature of forms, human souls are only differentiated by the body into which they are placed. Whether embodied or disembodied, human souls must have a particular identity, and yet due to the nature of the human substantial form, this cannot be. It is only angels, as we saw in the last section, which are differentiated from each other by their forms, for they have no matter. The nature of human souls is such that they must be of one kind, as difference of form implies difference of species. On the other hand, one might question whether it is enough to explain the differences between human beings for their bodies to differ. Though, as it happens, Aquinas' account does support the view that no two souls are the same, as we shall discuss shortly. It must be remembered, though, that the Thomistic account of soul concerns that which gives us life, nothing about our status as individuals. All members of the species *Homo sapiens* live a human life, and so it is in this sense that we are the same.

Following on from this, Aquinas considers the role of the soul as the act of the body. He compares the human soul to the vegetative and sensitive soul, which have no act apart from the body and therefore cannot originate except from it. As the human soul is of the same substance as the vegetative and sensitive soul, it too cannot be created apart from the body. No more detail is given here, but this can be better understood if we consider again the nature of the soul as the form of the body. For Aquinas, the only way a human soul can exist is by being a particular human soul, and the only way a human soul can get to be a particular soul in the first place is by being in a particular human body. So, for Aquinas the soul of Socrates could not antedate its embodiment, because Socrates' soul is essentially this particular soul (Socrates' soul), but nothing could make a never-has-been-embodied soul a particular soul.

Finally, Aquinas discusses the soul's purpose apart from the body, such that even if it could exist in this form, the matter is still open as to why it would then ever be united with the body at all. He offers three suggestions: by the soul's own choice, by God to perfect the body, and by God in order to punish the soul. The latter two call into question God's original plan, suggesting that creation was not complete, and thereby

contradicting the first chapters of Genesis. At best, one would have to say that the soul's creation at this point had no purpose. At worst, one ends up taking a false view of Scripture, as Origen is known to do with regard to the punishment of souls in the human body, which Aquinas dismisses. The argument that the soul's infusion was its own choice has with it another set of problems. Firstly, it denies the necessity of the soul-body union for the body. The soul can exist without the body, but the body cannot exist without the soul. Secondly, it suggests the possibility of the soul leaving the body at any time, of its own election. Thirdly, and probably most importantly, it puts forward the idea that the soul is in some way separately conscious from the person, which in turn puts pressure on an account of man as more than his soul.

x. *The Necessity of Body and Soul*

What, then, can be said about each human person at the point of death? This brings us to the final discussion surrounding the application of the scholastic animalist viewpoint: the possibility of the afterlife. In order to believe in the afterlife, as many people – both religious and otherwise – do, one must either hold an account of the continuation of body or soul, or of the whole composite human being. It is quite clear that, at death, the body itself ceases to be – either from eventual decay in the ground or immediate destruction via cremation – or just in the sense that a dead body is not really a body at all. However, there is a sense in which Aquinas argues for both the continuation of the soul and of the whole person, the first immediately, the second as a result of the first.

xi. *Incorruptibility and Substantial Forms*

His first point brings us back to the discussion on the nature of the soul, and in particular, its incorruptibility. This refers to a being's lack of tendency towards destruction. It is not that the soul cannot be destroyed (through God's power), but rather that there is no principle of corruption within it. Neither can it be corrupted *per accidens*. The destruction of the body does not destroy the soul, but instead it causes the soul to function without the body. On a *prima facie* conception, this looks to contradict what we already know about the soul, namely that it is the form of the body, weakly subsistent, and in a loose sense, part of the body as composite. Only homonymously can an arm be said to exist without the rest of the body, and so the soul plays a similar role in terms of its subsistence. However, a soul is still a soul when it is not actively the form of the body. So how can this be?

Aquinas responds to these objections by demonstrating that it is not on account of subsistence that the soul continues after the body, but as a result of its being a special kind of substantial form. He notes that it is as a result of the denial of this that many have argued for the corruptibility of the soul, either by reducing the intellect to likeness with the other senses (which affects its function and therefore its continued existence), or by holding that soul itself is composed of form and matter. Once one has accepted the necessity of the soul's being as a substantial form, it is easy to see how and why one might argue for its incorruptibility *per se*. The nature of the human soul is such that existence cannot be taken from it, except directly by God, because it is not dependent on either the matter or the composite substance. Instead, it is the substantial form that

communicates its own act of existence to the matter (*QD De Anima* 14, co.⁵⁴). Nonetheless, it might be possible for an individual substantial form of this kind to go out of existence – say, as a result of divine influence – but not as a result of the destruction of something else (corruption *per accidens*). The important point, then, is that souls do not *naturally* go out of existence, even when the biological life of the body ends, and the body accordingly goes out of existence.

xii. *Continuing Functions of Soul*

It is one thing to say that the soul continues after the death of the body, but quite another to say that its powers do also. We know already that the majority of the soul's powers are actualised through the body, and so without it, they either cease to function, or must be actualised in some other way. This does not apply to the intellect. Unlike the other powers of soul, intellect does not act through any bodily organ, and so there is no logical reason why its principles should cease at the point of death. Furthermore, Aquinas argues that the soul can only continue if its operations continue, for without which it would have no function. Again, this relies at least partly on the truth of the belief that nothing in nature is pointless, which is contentious. On the other hand, if it can be shown that the most logical explanation includes an argument for the continuing function of the powers of soul, then this ceases to be problematic anyway. I turn, therefore, to Aquinas' explanation of the above. The most extensive account of the powers of the separated soul can be found in the latter part of the Treatise on Man. Nonetheless, much of this has been taken up by Pasnau (*ibid*), so I will only give a summary of the views here.

Aquinas attempts to use *modus ponens* in order to prove the soul's operation on the basis of its separation, but it is not yet established whether the latter can really be assumed. Furthermore, this can only be proved on the basis of the conditional: that if the soul does not continue to operate, neither can it be separated, and therefore, exist separately. Such a view seems to follow from Aquinas' substance ontology, however, such that function is conceptually tied to existing. That is, to exist *per se* is to exist in a particular way, with a particular function, as is part of that thing's essence. With regard to the soul, given its existence as an intellective soul, to lack the capacity for intellectivity would take some from its essence, although, this does not require the soul to actually function in this way, merely for the capacity to be present. What is required, however, is that the soul continues to function in some way at all times for it to continue to exist. Therefore, the truth of the soul's separate existence does demonstrate its operation.

The biggest question, though, is of course how the soul continues to function in this way given that it does not even continue to exist in the same way. The answer is that it does not. Instead, the change in mode of being brings about a change in the mode of understanding. This is not actually presented as an argument, but one might question whether it needs to be. Such a view is hardly contrary to what we know to be true in nature and medicine. Take viviparous reproduction, for example. The foetus begins by taking in nutrients

⁵⁴ *Quaestiones Disputatae De Anima*

and oxygen from the mother through the umbilical cord. After birth, the change in its mode of being (from living inside the womb to outside) brings about change in its mode of nutrition and respiration. Its life continues as before, but the way it lives has now changed. Similarly, in the case of cardiac arrest, a person may be put on a life-support machine in order to artificially continue respiration and heartbeat. At the point of recovery, the person's body then begins these functions once more for itself, and the mode of respiration changes accordingly.

With this in mind, it is easy to see why Aquinas wishes to attribute the same kind of idea to the soul's understanding at the point of death. During life, the soul is united to the body as its form, and it is said to understand through phantasms or mental images brought about by sense data. Once separated from the body, the soul cannot appeal to sense data to form phantasms, and so its mode of understanding changes in accordance with its mode of existence. Aquinas explains this as follows:

When [the soul] is separated from the body, it has a mode of understanding, by turning to simply intelligible objects, as is proper to other separate substances. Hence it is as natural for the soul to understand by turning to the phantasms as it is for it to be joined to the body (89, 1 co.).

Comparison is now made between the separated soul and the angels, who are said to understand directly by the influence of "the Divine light". This is not as natural for souls as for angels though, and so Aquinas argues that the relation between body and soul is beneficial for the soul, despite its being able to function in this other way prior to bodily resurrection.

xiii. *The Nature of the Separated Soul*

This is then explained further in the second book of the *SCG*, where Aquinas defends the view that the soul is not a separate substance. This has already been discussed with regard to the relationship between soul and body as form and matter, but here he puts forward arguments that demonstrate the soul's nature as form separate from the composite. Firstly, each angel, as a separate substance, is said to be of a different species, while each human soul is of the same species. Furthermore, each angel is more like the next than like the human soul. This is the natural consequence of each angel having a different form. The same does not apply to humans, who though they do not have qualitatively identical souls⁵⁵, possess forms in accordance with their species. Concerning the second argument, then, the human soul belongs to the human species both during its union with the body and after. A separated human soul is still a human soul, but it is not a human being, and so although separate from the body, it is not actually a separate substance.

But this seems to raise more issues than it solves. How can a separate being not be a separate substance if able to exist outside the composite? The most likely explanation is that the soul is not a true substance,

⁵⁵ This account of the individuation of souls is too involved to be discussed here. Instead, I will return to it in the next subsection.

complete in species, but something like the intermediaries existing before the infusion of the human soul in the womb. Nonetheless, if it is still a form apt to be in union with matter, how – when in this state - is it sustained without its own life as in the case of an angel? This, as we shall see shortly, is one of the greatest problems for Aquinas' account of life after death. However, he does not actually spend much time on these kinds of questions, interested instead in motivating a view of the soul that guarantees its continuing to function, but he does give us some clues as to the foreign state of a separated soul. It seems that the cognition of the separated soul is something like a poor version of the angels', yielding knowledge that is general and confused, such that even though the soul can exist in this state, it is not natural for it to do so. One should therefore consider the soul's relationship with the body to be natural and proper to it, but not a matter of essence (89.1). As a result of this, it must also be true that the soul's faculties – excluding intellect – cannot be essential to it either.

Nonetheless, little of this has much bearing on our questions about personhood, for the separated soul is not a person. Instead, then, our interests lie in what becomes of the person at the point of death, and the relation between him and his resurrected self.

xiv. Personal Identity and the Individuation of Souls

The nature of soul-separation is such that what remains is not a person, but a 'part' of a person. As is essential to scholastic animalism, neither my body nor my soul is enough to constitute me. Instead, I only continue to exist as body and soul. However, for Aquinas, although I will go out of existence for an unspecified period of time, ultimately, I do survive the death of my body. Prior to my resurrection though, I no longer exist, but my soul still does. What is important about this theory is not the state of my soul during this time, but how this change in my soul's mode of being affects my existence and re-existence.

Firstly, then, when a person dies, the soul leaves the body, and the person goes out of existence. This is necessary in order for resurrection to happen, for there can be no resurrection without death, and death implies ceasing to exist. Nonetheless, this leaves the person as a special case, as substances do not typically go out of existence temporarily. It is better, however, to speak in terms of ultimate survival, for it makes no sense to say that two different living beings have the same life, as we discussed earlier. To have the same life, is surely to be the same being. There is a definite sense in which a person's life comes to an end at the point of death, and it begins again after resurrection. The soul's incorruptibility results in the continuation of its life, according to the soul's role as life-principle. In the same way that the soul is said to have a different mode of existence, we might say that life continues with a different mode of existence, that is, mental life, though it is debatable whether this counts as continuing.

Furthermore, mental life may exist after the death of the person, but in what sense does that life belong to the person whose soul it is? It is not the person who continues after death, but only a part of him; a part, moreover, that seems to have a level of consciousness attributed to a thinking being, who is not him. This is

surely the most worrying aspect of the account given, and yet this is the necessary conclusion that results from the above premises. When the soul leaves the body at the point of death, the man ceases to exist. Given that he no longer exists, any consciousness that the soul partakes in cannot belong to him. Nonetheless, because the soul is incorruptible, and it therefore changes its mode of existence at the point of separation, it is necessary that it continues functioning in its separated state. In order for the soul to function though, it must engage in cognition. Inevitably, then, there is now a new subject of experience, a quasi-person. One might attempt to block the move from the soul engages in cognition in a separate state, to the soul is now a person, by making the case that the soul is not a separate substance, but a weakly subsisting being, or perhaps now an intermediary. After all, whatever we think of the meaning of the Latin term *persona*, it is hard to see how a being working off sins in purgatory and so on could fail to be a person, in the ordinary sense of the English term, whether or not it is a complete being. This is certainly bad news for Aquinas, who rejects Boethius's assertion that souls are also persons. It is not surprising, therefore, that Aquinas' view on the separated soul is seen as absurd and difficult to reconcile with his other commitments. Nonetheless, we shall turn instead to the matter of the individuation of souls to see what really happens to the original person.

Although in no way assumed during the discussion of the nature of soul, it is an important aspect of Aquinas' account of persons that each one's soul is individual to him, and by extension, to his body. Formerly, it seemed that it was the matter that individuated the person, and so each person might as well be given a qualitatively identical soul. According to Aquinas, however, it is not enough for individuation for one's body to be unique; the same must apply to the soul also. Although it is true that separated souls are distinguishable by which body they were united with, this is not the whole story. Instead, souls are specifically designed in accordance with the body they are to be united with. Robert Pasnau comments on Aquinas' account of soul individuation with an expression of surprise that he does not take the view that knowledge and understanding of the soul at the point of death are among the key factors in determining identity, as would seem both compatible and consistent with the rest of his commitments (*ibid*, p. 382). As it is, though, Aquinas holds to a view of infusion whereby souls are individuated according to the physical properties of their bodies. It is not the body that affects how the soul is manifested in the person, however, but rather each soul is created by God in accordance with the body to which it will be united. Just as no two bodies are the same, therefore, neither are two souls.

Despite the necessity of such a view for the account of separated soul given, it is actually quite natural to think in this way. The sense in which 'better souls' are given to 'better bodies' is purely a comment on cognitive ability, and not on any other facts that might determine whether one body is superior than another. All this really says, therefore, is that souls with greater intellectual ability are assigned to bodies designed to support them most effectively. In scientific terms, the brain's capacity for advanced cognition, perhaps in terms of number of glial cells or neural pathways, is directly correlative to how powerful the intellect is. The puzzle with all this, though, concerns how the body determines what kind of soul it receives. It cannot be

true that the body itself acts upon the soul (*SCG*, II, 81), given the nature of matter and form, and so one must assume that instead God makes these adjustments when the foetus undergoes ensoulment.

But now we have another issue. If souls are all different, according to their cognitive dispositions, then how is it that they still belong to the one species, namely, human? Aquinas actually addresses this very objection in 85.7, where he argues against the view that different forms always belong to different species. Instead, where matter causes a difference in form, there is no issue. But does this really address the issue? How much difference is acceptable among the same species? And if the only intrinsic difference between separated souls and angels is the efficiency of the mode of cognition, which by this point is of the same kind, what is it that makes a human soul a human soul? The best answer that can be given at this point concerns the past and future state of the human soul, which differs entirely from the angels. An angel is always an angel, but a separated human soul was the form of a human body and will be once more.

This, then, takes us on to the looking at the matter of persistence, and the requirements for the continuation of the self from conception (or just after) to the afterlife. Aquinas' takes his view of the afterlife from various biblical Scriptures, which hold that man will die only to be raised again on the last day (also called the day of judgement), where he will be clothed with his old body or old flesh (Job 19:75-76). This is focused on particularly in chapter 80 onwards in *SCG*, IV, where Aquinas discusses the resurrection. It is not the resurrection specifically that interests us here, however, but rather the matter of what happens to each person beforehand. The idea is actually very simple – at least conceptually; it is the implications of such a view that make it hardest to accept. Returning to our earlier thoughts on the concept of 'person', it was made apparent that persons are not to be identified with their souls⁵⁶ (29.1 ad. 5), and so, if the soul were to continue, but the body were to decay, it is assumed that the person would cease also, where the cessation of life (in the biological sense) is the going out of existence of the person. A human person, or a human being, is a complete substance, unlike a separated soul. On the other hand, the soul is a part of the person, and so the continuation of the soul is the continuation of part of the person. We might want to say that a person partly survives, or words to that effect, but it is neither obvious that survival is non-binary, nor that one can jump from 'part of a person survives' to 'a person partly survives'.

xv. *'Partial Survival' and Divided Identity*

So, what is really going on here? In accordance with Scripture, Aquinas regards it as necessary that each separated soul is united with the body it once had, maintaining numerical identity. Ultimately then, each person survives death wholly. But if my soul is not me, inasmuch as it is only part of me, then really it can only be said that part of me survives prior to resurrection. Furthermore, the 'me' that exists prior to death cannot be said to be numerical identical to my separated soul. We cannot say that immediately after death I will be 'the sum of' a corpse and a separated soul (for Aquinas), because I am essentially a living human

⁵⁶ Or at least not while in the body – see chapter 4

being, having a life that involves both mind and body, and the sum of a corpse and a separated soul is not a human being, does not have a human body, and does not have a life that involves both mental and bodily events. Additionally, it would not make sense to say that one thing is numerically identical to two, and so now there is a sense in which identity is divided, incomplete or even absent. It is not uncommon in everyday speech to refer to a person's dead body as that person, but in more religious circles, the body is committed to the ground in accordance with the soul's passing on into the resurrection, where the person goes to be with Jesus. As such, the family are already looking towards the resurrection, giving the sense that the intermittent time is either very short or not experienced at all by the person who has died; in the words of St Paul, he is sleeping.

It is the latter understanding that seems to fit with Aquinas' approach. The separated soul, which is the only part left of the person, has the ability to gain knowledge and understanding, but there is no reason to think the person will be conscious of this, because if he were, he would exist – only as a disembodied soul perhaps – but still exist, and this seems not to be the case. If the disembodied soul is a 'knower' and an 'understander', it is one that stops being a knower or understander on the last day (otherwise, we would have one knower and understander (the ex-disembodied now re-embodied soul) as a proper part of the resurrected and 're-existent' human being. This makes it look as though the soul 'loses out' on resurrection day: before resurrection, a soul in heaven enjoys God, and afterwards, it becomes a mere proper part of something with knowledge and understanding; it goes back to being merely a proper part of something else that knows and understands, just as it was before death. But does a soul really stop having a mental life because it is joined to a glorified body? On the other hand, it seems difficult to suggest that the soul could be having experiences of which nobody is the subject. This would be like the eye receiving information from the outside world that never reaches the brain; there is nothing to interpret it, and so it is debatable whether it is really there. For this reason, it seems there must be a subject of the soul's experiences, but unless the person in some way continues to exist, he cannot be the subject of the soul's experiences. Once again, we are back at the idea that there is some new mental subject that comes into existence at death, or is now subjectified, and ceases to exist/is de-subjectified at the point of resurrection, thereby losing out to the original possessor of the soul. This is a bad result, and yet bodily resurrection is supposed to be a good. How, then, can it be that some other 'person' exists as the subject of your soul's experiences between your death and resurrection? Aquinas would surely want to deny this, but it seems that he is in no position to do so without giving up one or more of his other premises.

One in particular, that even calls into question the cogency of hylomorphism, is the assertion that souls can go on having mental lives separate from the body. Not only does this result in the conclusion that there must exist another subject of experience, seemingly a person, but not the original person whose soul it was, but it puts pressure on the account of the soul as a substantial form. In order to have a mental life, as a human person, each of us must have intellect and will, existing as accidents of the composite. However, the soul as substantial form is not the composite, and thereby can only possess essential properties. Unless intellect and

will can be shown to be essential to the soul, and not merely the person, there is a serious problem with the soul being a substantial form. That is, if souls and human beings both essentially have intellect and will, there is a too-many-thinkers/willers problem for the earthly being. If souls essentially have will and intellect, though, and there is just one thinker and willer, then the human being himself does not think or will. This is neither plausible nor Thomistic. Furthermore, we have returned to the additional issue of how the soul could be a separate being (though not necessarily a substance) without itself having an essence. We have seen that the soul as being has a definition, but given the role it plays post-death, it is now looking to be more like a separate substance, with its own accidents, that the only come to be a part of a composite substance. It is not clear how this account can be reconciled with the discussion of the nature of human persons.

If the story ended there, the issue of the identity of the separated soul would be quite a damning one for Aquinas' account of human nature. However, because the person prior to death and the one with a resurrection body are one and the same, identity is (ultimately) preserved. Identity here relies on the essential properties of each person being retained or restored. For a human being, this equates to a specific human soul – as given by God at ensoulment – and a specific body, suited to fit that soul. Because a person is both body and soul, it must be true – in accordance with hylomorphism – that souls are always reunited with their original bodies. We know these bodies have different properties – as compared with Christ's body in Philippians 3:21 – but whatever is needed to account for sameness of body is maintained through sameness of soul, and sameness of body and soul equates to sameness of person.

xvi. *Continuing Life and the Composite View*

Persistence, for the scholastic animalist, is roughly accounted for by the continuing existence of the same body and the same soul. This then calls for numerical identity, but not necessarily qualitative identity. Not only is numerical identity of body and soul required under Aquinas' understanding of what a human person is, but as a result, it is necessary that should the pre-resurrection body have been destroyed utterly and completely, that God will supernaturally reverse the damage. As a consequence, we have no reason to think that the pre-resurrection body and the post-resurrection body will be qualitatively non-identical, even if they could be, and indeed God would surely not wish them to be, given the state some bodies are in right before death. Furthermore, the same applies to the soul. Given that the soul continues to exist as a form from death up to re-embodiment, one has good cause to say that this is the same soul that existed at the beginning of the person's life. Furthermore, many of the kind of thought experiments that bring about a conclusion of persistence without identity would actually be dismissed by the scholastic animalist on the grounds that such an outcome would be impossible, the most notable ones being body-swaps, where someone's consciousness is transferred to another person's body, for example, Locke's story about the Prince and the Cobbler. Given that consciousness is mostly associated with intellect, it would not even be possible for this to happen; intellect can neither be separated from soul nor person. Each person has both his soul and body essentially; he cannot possess another's body.

Nonetheless, are there any other possible processes with unfavourable conclusions for Aquinas' account of personal identity? The obvious one concerns the change in matter over time. According to hylomorphism, the relationship between form and matter, and therefore soul and body is such that the body is the body it is because of the soul that belongs to it. And yet, we know that bodily matter does change over time, as cells die and are replaced, or simple transplants are conducted. This is not denied by Aquinas. Instead his view is that the persistence of a human being is tied to the persistence of his human body as a living thing, but not to the persistence of matter constituting that body at a given time. There is only one human body, and it is made up of different matter at different times.

But there is a further problem: Aquinas' account is not open to the possibility of having a particular soul essentially, but a particular body accidentally. Although there may be no logical issue with the soul being joined to a particular body contingently, this does not allow the relationship between soul and body in the composite to be essential. To be a particular human being is to have a particular soul and body at all times. As a result, the pre-resurrection and post-resurrection person must be numerically identical. However, they cannot be qualitatively identical. Not only does each person's body change in various ways across his mortal life, but the resurrection body is said to have properties the earthly body cannot, as St Paul explains in his letter to the Philippians. Nonetheless, identity of no sort continues between death and resurrection for the body. God may join the soul to the body once more, but only after restoring it. Just like the person, the human body *qua* body, has ceased to exist.

What, then, can be said to explain the relation? One option is to base identity on the continuation of the same soul, where although the person as a whole goes out of existence, the incorruptibility of the soul means that one part remains. But it would still be the case that the person only continues ultimately once soul and body are reunited, as a soul is still not a person. There is still an issue, therefore, with explaining how sameness of soul gives identity, when the person is divided. Although the caterpillar undergoes significant changes to its body, identity is preserved because it is still the same basic stuff that remains. This is not the case with the person, for soul and body are actually divided at death. It is not uncommon in religious circles for people to speak of the dead person 'going on', but biblical Scripture certainly does not seem to support the view that soul is any more than a part of the person.

There is little reason to think, however, that Aquinas is concerned with such. He seems to argue quite intentionally that each person is numerically identical to the ensouled foetus, but not to the developing embryo. It should be no surprise to us, therefore, that the person goes out of existence at death, to appear again at the resurrection, given that persons are necessarily composed of rational soul and organic body. But is he right? And, if not, what does this say for the scholastic animalist approach as a whole?

It seems that personal persistence for Aquinas concerns something other than, or something more than, personal identity. It is unlikely that he would go as far as Parfit, who argues that identity is not what matters

for survival, but rather psychological continuity, as beliefs, memories and character traits, and yet he does imply that personal identity is not the only possible criterion for personal persistence. Identity of soul is not personal identity because a soul is not a complete person. This results in a halfway account of persistence between full personal identity, and the Parfitian notion of survival without identity. On the other hand, the survival of part of a whole is not necessarily the partial survival of the whole. Instead, the man ceases to exist, and then comes back into existence, the very same man, constituted of the very same body and soul, the very same form and (enough of the very same) matter.

A person is said to survive ultimately only when his soul and body are united, thereby preserving personal identity. Instead, we might say that he persists by the continuation of his soul. Yet, this soul is not qualitatively identical to either the one he began with, nor the one he will ultimately have, for it takes on a different mode of being after leaving the body, having a somewhat distorted psychological existence and perhaps not even knowing itself as itself. Numerically, though, it is the same soul. As something incorruptible, the soul does not die with the body and instead lives on to reanimate the body once again. What continues then is not the person directly, but that person's life.

However, is this not what is happening in the womb also? Aquinas does not want to argue for survival of the embryo, in the sense of continuing as a foetus and then a baby, and yet, that which is ascribed animal life is necessarily alive. Given that nowhere does Aquinas argue for the death of the embryo prior to the existence of the ensouled foetus – he merely claims that it goes out of existence just as the person does at death – it follows logically that despite the argument against it being the same substance, the embryo and the foetus are the same being, connected by one life that they both share. Unfortunately, though, this is not Aquinas' argument; it is merely compatible with his other commitments. So, what does this all say for scholastic animalism as a whole?

The most important tenets of scholastic animalism are that man is an essentially-composite being, both person and animal, and possesses a particular body and a particular soul. It is therefore not essential for identity to be grounded at all stages of life (this embryo is this foetus, which is this child, which is this adult etc.), even though there is persistence. Instead, one need only demonstrate that at all times when a human being exists, there is present also a person and an animal identical to him.

Looking again at the embryo, then, which is said to go out of existence at the point when the intellectual soul is infused, given that one substance is destroyed and another generated in its place, we seem to come to the unlikely conclusion that the embryo and the later foetus are not numerically identical, despite sharing up to a hundred percent of material substance. However, this conclusion is drawn on the basis not of the scholastic animalist position itself, but follows from the given interpretation ofhylomorphism regarding soul and body. That is to say, it is due to the view that a change in substantial form is a change in substance, that the embryo is regarded as a separate being from the foetus. Nonetheless, this can be dismissed without flaws developing

in the scholastic animalist approach. Instead, a new interpretation would be required. For now, though, we turn to animalism, or rather contemporary animalism, to evaluate its responses to the questions that have been raised.

Chapter 2: Contemporary Animalism

§2.1 – An Introduction to Contemporary Animalism

i. Basic Formulations

While scholastic animalism equates the concepts of human animality with human personhood, and regards both as permanent and essentially belonging to human beings [by which I mean ‘us’], contemporary animalism only considers it necessary that we are (human) animals. Nonetheless, it is not required of the animalist to be anti-personalist, though the majority of them do seem to be, and so we may also be persons at all, or at least some, of the times we exist. While animalism in general is a possibility for any such animalists, the reality is that all notable animalists hold to an account of human animalism, even though they do not always state this in their definitions. As such, I will use ‘animalists’ and ‘animalism’ to refer to the view we have called human animalism, unless stated otherwise.

This chapter, then, is divided into three main sections. The first will focus on the key beliefs of the contemporary animalist in terms of basic formulations that are accepted by all proponents of the view. Additionally, I shall discuss in turn the two main types of animalism – organic and somatic – according to their most notable followers, comparing and contrasting them with each other and with scholastic animalism, including looking at some of the issues presented in the previous chapter.

The second section will then revisit the concept ‘person’ and consider the ways in which contemporary animalism addresses our belief that we are (at least currently) persons. In the final section, we will look at the metaphysical implications of the animalist account, with particular focus on our persistence as human animals before birth and after the destruction of the body.

First, then, we turn to the animalist position. This can be formulated as follows:

a) $\Box(\forall x)x \text{ is a human person} \rightarrow x \text{ is a (human) animal}$

‘Human’ person is specified here to avoid the false claim that all persons are necessarily human, though it is not unusual to find ‘human’ omitted in some formulations. On the other hand, animalism does not necessarily accept the reverse: all human animals are necessarily persons. Human personhood guarantees human animality, but it is not the case for animalism in general that human animality guarantees human personhood. The relation, therefore, is one-way. Furthermore, when the animalist says that we are animals, this is understood to mean not only that each human person and each human being shares a decomposition with some human animal, contra personalism, but that each is numerically identical to some human animal. Although animalism should not be taken to equate human beings with their material bodies, animalists tend

to be materialists, who reject any notion of an immaterial soul or mind, according to which each human being can be divided (at least conceptually) into two or more parts. However, as was discussed in the previous chapter, it is not a direct consequence of animalism that one should subscribe to materialism, but is instead dependent upon one's understanding of what it is to be an animal. An animalist may, therefore, believe that a human being is essentially a composite of body and soul, on the understanding that animals are essentially composites of body and soul. Such is the view of Thomas Aquinas.

Necessarily, then, animalists see a human being as one thing, an animal, specifically a human animal, or a member of the species *Homo sapiens*. Snowdon, to whom the theory was first attributed, formulates it as follows:

b) Each of us is identical with, is one and the same thing as, an animal⁵⁷

For some supporters of the theory though – Snowdon included – the claims of animalism go beyond the above formulation, stating that we are necessarily (or essentially) and permanently animals – necessarily (or essentially) and permanently identical with an animal – and therefore could not exist except as animals. This view is also expressed by Olson, for whom this conclusion naturally follows from the idea that human animals are essentially animals (in the identity-expressing sense of 'are'), just as other animals are essentially animals (in the identity-expressing sense of 'are').⁵⁸ Furthermore, it is often said that this stronger idea is what really makes one an animalist. This is also the definition under which I will be working, such that a human being is identical to an animal, and so his going out of existence will be concurrent with the disappearance of that animal.

The general view is described by Blatti (2014):

*The conditions whose satisfaction is necessary and sufficient for a past or future being to be identical with a human person that exists now just are those whose satisfaction is necessary and sufficient for a past or future being to be identical with an animal that exists now.*⁵⁹

He then explains that these conditions differ between animalists, splitting them into two camps. The first, subscribed to notably by Olson, holds that life is necessary for persistence, such that remaining alive is both a necessary and sufficient condition for an organism's continued existence *per se*. This is organic animalism, where death is the end of persistence, such that there is not even the concept of a dead animal. A 'dead animal' is not an animal in any sense. Neither can a dead animal ever be numerically identical with me; at death, I simply cease to exist.

⁵⁷ Snowdon, P F (2014), p. 7

⁵⁸ Olson, Eric (2003)

⁵⁹ Blatti, Stephan (2016)

But this is not the only view. For others, it is not necessary that an organism continues the same life processes, but that its structure remains intact. Death may not, therefore, cause the organism to cease to exist, for this depends on its origin and structure. In terms of persistence then, these animalists, known as somaticists (*somatic* – relating to the body), argue that “the persistence of biological organisms depends on their retaining (enough of) the organisation of parts that is the product of their natural biological development, and that makes them apt for life, while stopping short of saying that life itself is necessary.” (Mackie, 1999, cited in Blatti, 2014). This is not, however, a very popular view among animalists, who generally fall into the organic camp.

This debate about the persistence conditions required for organisms to continue to exist is really a debate about the nature of animals and plants and so on, in this case, human animals or members of the species *Homo sapiens*. Like Aquinas, there is something in the nature of a human animal, for the organic animalist, which requires it to be living in order to exist. Let us consider this further.

ii. Olson’s Organic Animalism

Olson seems to see it as obvious that firstly, we are human beings, and secondly, that human beings are animals, and thus that we are animals. However, he still regards animalism as an unpopular view among philosophers, listing ten thinkers from Plato to the modern day who reject the notion of human persons as animals. He notes Aristotle as an exception, though of course the view was held by Aquinas too for the reasons highlighted above. For Olson, though, it seems that animalism gives the best account of the facts. This he approaches with the following question: if we are not animals, what are we? He attempts to answer this by drawing on some of the views previously mentioned, not directly disproving their theses, but offering a better alternative. This he calls the Thinking-Animal Argument. It has the following structure:

TA1) There is a human animal sitting in your chair

2) The human animal sitting in your chair is thinking

3) You are the (only) thinking being sitting in your chair, therefore

4) You are a human animal

The denial that we are animals, therefore, requires the rejection of one or more of these premises. In the first instance, the rejection of the belief that there is a human animal sitting in your chair only really seems plausible with the denial that there are such things as human animals.⁶⁰ Given that ‘human animal’ is really synonymous with ‘*homo sapiens*’, though, it would surely be a strange conclusion; it is hard to deny that such a creature is seated in your chair. Olson defends this premise further on the grounds that a rejection of

⁶⁰ As is the position of Michael Burke, “Dion and Theon: An essentialist solution to an ancient puzzle”, *Journal of Philosophy*. This view allows one to say that although there are human animals, they do not coincide with human persons, for the same reason that bits of clay do not coincide with clay statues. This is, nevertheless, a strange view.

the existence of animals, as would surely be required for one to deny that there are human animals, would thus also apply to anything else that might be seated in your chair if not an animal. That is to say, that the denial that there is a human animal in your chair only really makes sense if there is no being in your chair, animal or otherwise. Nonetheless, even if the premise that there is a human animal in your chair turns out to be undeniable, this is not enough to prove that you are the human animal sitting in your chair. As such, there is no reason why even an anti-animalist should want reject premise one.

Premise two, on the other hand, may be rejected by those who would not wish to attribute thinking to a human animal, in accordance with their conception that purely material beings cannot think. Olson does not directly refute this argument, but instead discusses how, even though bodies cannot be spoken about using autonomous language (e.g. my body thinks, writes, reads etc.), and minds cannot be spoken about using bodily language (e.g. my mind is so big, so heavy, so shaped etc.), it does not follow that thinking beings cannot be described in both ways. One must, however, accept that there is only one thing in your chair that is thinking, and even so, this does not rule out the possibility that, although there is a human animal in your chair, and there is only one thing in your chair that is thinking, that it is not directly the human animal in your chair that is thinking, but you, a person, sharing a decomposition with that animal.

As such, it may not be necessary for one to reject premise three, in order to deny the conclusion that the thinking being in your chair is an animal, and that therefore you are an animal. However, premise three may also be rejected by those of the belief that there is more than one thinking being in your chair – a person and an animal. This, Olson considers to be an untenable position. Even if we were to regard the two beings as connected in such a way that we might call them one, there really is no telling which one is you. The thinking animal may claim to be a person, after all it has the appropriate mental properties⁶¹, and so do you, and yet you have no way of knowing which you are. The only way one could realistically hold such a view is that if, as we suggested earlier, one considered you and the human animal connected to you as distinct, where only you have any mental properties, but this risks making the controversial claim that no animals have mental properties, which is unjustified at best. The personalist, then, would deny the possibility that the human animal could be a thinking being. Whether this is attractive or not will be discussed in the next chapter, but for now let us consider the conclusions Olson draws with regard to his argument for animalism. He writes:

And don't we have a strong conviction that we are animals? We all think we are human beings. And until the philosophers got hold of us, we took human beings to be animals. Of course that doesn't show that we are animals. But it shows that we seem to be. It is the opponents of animalism who insist that this appearance is deceptive: that the animal you see in the mirror is not really you. That we are animals ought to be the default position. If anything is hard to believe, it's the alternatives. (2003, p. 332)⁶²

⁶¹ This we shall return to in the next section.

⁶² Olson, Eric (2003)

As philosophers, then, we certainly do not want to be seen pushing views that seem totally at odds with what we believe about ourselves just because we dislike the conclusions. As was discussed in the previous chapter, the right view should neither be in conflict with reason nor with science, the latter of which of course holds that we are human beings, *Homo sapiens*, a species of the animal kingdom. It is for this reason that I consider Olson to be correct in his insistence that we, whatever else we might be, are still animals, given that we think we are animals, and science tells us that we are animals; we may have strong convictions in both reason and science. Nonetheless, this is still not enough to ground animalism. According to the majority view, the key claim of the animalist is not merely that we are animals, but that we are *permanently and essentially* animals. This, then, is not merely a biological claim, but one of a metaphysical nature. As such, it may be just as plausible to say that animality is essential to us as to suppose it to be merely an accidental property of our being human.

In the latter case, though we may currently be animals, it seems at least metaphysically possible that we may continue to exist apart from our bodies, that is, our extra-mental parts. For some, it is a sufficient condition of our existence that our minds continue to exist and have activity attributed to them, be it as a disembodied soul in heaven, or even as a cerebral cortex (as the ‘thinking part’ of a brain in a vat)⁶³. Clearly in neither of these two states can a person, if he continues to exist, be said to be any kind of animal. For this reason, as we saw in the previous chapter, although Aquinas does support an account of a separated soul following the death of the body, he does not allow the continuation of a person’s soul to be sufficient for the continued existence of that person. Such a view is of course necessary to one who views human persons as essentially animals. The anti-animalist, on the other hand, may attribute a person’s persistence to something other than his animal body, and by so doing resist the move from ‘we are animals’ (we share a decomposition with animals) to ‘we are essentially animals’ (we essentially share a decomposition with animals).

How, then, may the animalist argue his case? It is not uncommon to find steps being made from ‘we are animals’ (identity-expressing sense of ‘are’) to ‘we are essentially animals’ (identity-expressing sense of ‘are’), simply on the basis that animals (human and otherwise) are generally considered to be essentially animals. Why, therefore, is it reasonable to argue that human animals are not essentially human animals, while cats are essentially cats? Surely ‘cat’ is no more a species of animal than ‘*Homo sapiens*’, and if non-human animals are essentially animals, how could human animals not be, given that all mammals at least are clearly minded to some degree? As we have seen, many anti-animalists would consider a human being reducible to his mind, that is, the mind is a sufficient for persistence, but few, if any, would afford a cat the same consideration. Furthermore, just as reducing a cat to its mind, in the sense of its persistence, would take something away from its felinity, it is not clear that such a reduction would not equally deprive us of something of our humanity. Although many of us might be inclined to believe in the possibility of our own persistence as a brain in a vat, for example, few of us would look at a brain in a vat and accept that it was still

⁶³ For Olson, a whole brain in a vat is a very mutilated but still living animal.

a human being, and least of all an animal. It should be noted though, that Olson does not view the whole brain as just an organ, but instead allows the possibility that it is still a living albeit mutilated animal, and what is left behind is a lifeless, empty-headed corpse. If you do survive the experiment, then you now exist as a brain. This need not apply to just the cerebral cortex, however, and it is the belief of some philosophers that a person could be reduced to just a part of the brain, on the grounds that this is all that is required for the persistence of mind. We shall return to these ideas later on.

With these thoughts in mind, though, let us consider the further implications of the belief that we human beings are essentially animals. Firstly, there is the idea that animalism ignores, or at least cannot account for, any clear differences in intellect, will and moral capacity between human beings and the rest of the animal kingdom. This follows, though, from a mistaken interpretation of the initial premise; to say that we are essentially animals is not to say that we are *merely* animals. Not only can we be animals as well as persons, philosophers and scientists, but it is not implausible – though may be contested by anti-animalists – that we may have intellect, will and moral capacity leagues above other creatures and still be animals. We are not *merely* animals, but we are animals rather than immaterial souls, mental properties or minds.

Secondly, our survival would not depend on mental continuity but on our continuing as animals (and being alive, according to Olson, and most animalists, going back to Aquinas and Aristotle). The personal identity question is not one for now, but our being essentially animals means that our existence depends on the existence of an animal. It is not uncommon for philosophers to hold to beliefs about mental continuity for persistence, especially in cases of thought experiments where brains or parts of brains are switched, and one has to decide whether or not you still exist. Yet, in the real-life cases, persistence of the organism is usually what matters. It might be, as Olson comments, that a loved one ends up in a PVS, with little or no brain activity, and still this is not enough for that numerical being to have ceased to exist. Despite the fact that sometimes the person's relatives prefer to think their loved one has gone on or ceased to be a person, in the eyes of the state, there is still a human being bearing his name, and to switch off life-support would amount to ending his life. Furthermore, such a decision can be very hard to make, given that despite the brain damage, the person may be perfectly healthy. He may be unable to respond, while the rest of his body is able to function normally, at least on life-support. If, then, the decision is made to keep him alive no longer, it will be at the point when life-support is discontinued that the person is legally deemed to be dead. It seems, therefore, that although in a PVS, there is still a human being in the bed identical to your loved one. Even in the case where mental continuity is lost, organic persistence continues. The debate, however, concerns whether organic persistence is really persistence of me, or just persistence of my body, though for the animalist, they ought to be the same. Furthermore, a loss of mental continuity is not necessarily a loss of mental function, as found in brain-damaged patients with severe memory loss. There may be gaps in their mental continuity, but enough recovery to continue as a rational human being. The real question is that of whether a human animal can survive the loss of its mind, as will put Olson at odds with Aquinas' brand of

animalism given that the latter sees this as impossible. Contemporary organic animalism must suppose that it can, while scholastic animalism allows no such possibility.

Given that organic animalism supports an account of persistence up to the point of the death of the animal, then, something more must be said about the criteria for death. This, though, is a very controversial issue. In today's society, it is considered acceptable to harvest organs from any individual found to be brain-dead, where brain-death amounts to the ceasing of brainstem functions. If such a diagnosis is made, the individual is considered legally dead (and at least ceases to exist under a Thomistic account). Nonetheless, such a definition is not favoured by all⁶⁴, some even suggesting that this may just be a clever ploy in aid of guaranteeing a good supply of healthy organs for transplantation, and is not medically sound. Whatever the reason, it is certainly not obvious that irreversible brain damage should be sufficient for death, and by extension – at least for the animalist – the end of a particular individual's persistence.

With this in mind, it is worth pointing out that animalism in general does not necessarily equate the death of an animal with the ceasing to exist of that individual. Aquinas, for example, sees it as plausible that in certain end of life cases, the human person may cease to exist before its biological body has undergone all or any of the processes associated with organic death. This is not because death is defined according to function of the brainstem, but that rational capacity is required for the persistence of an individual human person and therefore being. In the case of the PVS patient, then, it may be that although the biological animal lives on, the person does not, and in turn, the animal may no longer be termed human. It may then be said that the turning off of life-support will constitute the death of an animal, but not a human animal. If this is to be accepted, it must be possible for a human person to cease to exist without biologically dying. Such a view seems to stand midway between standard animalism and certain branches of personalism, as we shall see in the following chapter.

Additionally, apparently in favour of animalism, there is the foetus argument. This is as follows: I am numerically identical to the foetus that I was, but the foetus is not mentally continuous with me. At least, an early term foetus is not.⁶⁵ Again, a human animal identical to me exists, despite there being little or no mental continuity between us. I would suggest, therefore, that this implication of animalism is in no way a real issue, though it does present problems for scholastic animalism. As we saw in the last chapter, given that human beings are essentially minded, it is not possible for a creature to be identical to one of us unless it too has a mind. Given that it is more than controversial that we are non-identical to the foetus existing in the womb before us, we must but concede that mindedness is not an essential property of being us, contra Aquinas.

⁶⁴ Such an idea would have been totally abhorrent to the Greeks, for whom death was marked by the absence of a beating heart.

⁶⁵ Olson states that he is in no way mentally continuous with a 12-week-old foetus, but modern science tells us that at this stage, the foetus has a brain and may even begin to think. It certainly moves between waking and sleeping. It is debatable, therefore, whether he is "in no way mentally continuous" with this being. This is a very extreme view. Better then to compare the adult human animal with an earlier term foetus.

Thirdly, Olson highlights the apparent conflict between animalism and any religious beliefs about the afterlife, resurrection or reincarnation. He does, however, suggest that no account of personal identity really suffices to explain these views, and that animalism is no worse than the others. Personally, I think this is a bit of a weak argument in favour of animalism; few people would be convinced by a view just because it is the best out of a bad lot. Furthermore, it seems that he is mistaken. Given the claims of animalism, there is no room for any of us to have been embodied by different successive animal bodies, unless these animals are in fact numerically identical beings. In a sense, this is the belief of reincarnation, and yet there is no way one can make sense of how two completely different animals can have the same criteria of identity. How can a cat be exactly the same animal as a human being? Olson, however, does seem to be correct in saying that being able to defend its view against such cases is not of significant benefit for anti-animalism.

On the other hand, animalism can make some sense of the resurrection. I cannot rule out the idea that these thoughts do not entirely encompass all possible views of life after death, but the Christian account of bodily resurrection, and the Hindu idea of reincarnation are surely the most well-known. For the former, then, it is typically believed that human beings at the end of their earthly lives die to then be resurrected (an unspecified period of time later) with bodies not unlike those they originally had, but with certain 'special' properties. While some believe that the dead go on to be angels, this is not a biblical view, such that whatever changes man undergoes after death, this is not at the level of his species. Man is still man. Man is still an animal. Additionally, for the animalist (contemporary and scholastic), man is the same animal. At the end of his earthly life, he dies to later be resurrected as the same being. As long as we have no reason to think that a person could exist post-death-pre-resurrection, no pressure is put on the conclusion that man is essentially, and thereby identical to, a particular animal. As such, there is no *prima facie* reason why animalism cannot be compatible with certain religious beliefs about the afterlife, and it must be concluded that none of these implications is strong enough to refute the theory as it currently stands. Furthermore, one might say that unless such accounts are really plausible, compatibility with them is of little importance, and if they are, it seems not to be impossible for God to bring back a human animal on the last day, no matter how much destruction his body has undergone beforehand.

iii. Mackie's Somatic Approach

Nonetheless, there may be a better way of presenting it. Like Olson and Snowdon, Mackie and Carter are both in favour of an account of human beings as essentially animals. Unlike Olson and Snowdon, however, they do not consider it necessary that we cease to exist when our biological bodies die, only on account of a significant change to our structural constitution. This is somatic animalism, and it stands in direct contrast to organic animalism on the matter of our persistence *per se* and as persons. Of the three, only scholastic animalism necessarily sees our personhood as essential as our animality, but despite both organic and somatic animalism allowing us to have first existed as non-persons in the womb, only somatic animalism allows us to remain persons even after death. In fact, as Mackie (1997) argues, this is quite necessary to our

being persons in the first place. Mackie demonstrates this in a similar way to Olson's Thinking-Animal argument, by presenting a valid argument, and making a case for the validity of its conclusion based on the unlikelihood of any of the premises being reasonably contradicted. He calls it the Death Argument, and is as follows:

D1) In some cases, after death there remains a dead person

2) In at least some of these cases, the dead person shares no psychological continuity with the pre-death person

3) In these cases, the dead person is numerically identical to the pre-death person, therefore

4) Psychological continuity is not necessary for personal identity

Nonetheless, despite the conclusion drawn here, namely, that we do not only persist in cases of psychological continuity, as is believed by both organic and somatic animalists, Mackie's engagement with the death argument serves another function. Against organic animalism, he holds that biological death is not sufficient to end the existence of human beings. While the former argues that our non-existence coincides with our physical death, the latter (among other somatic animalists) sees it as unnecessary that the two should be linked; we may die and yet not cease to exist. It seems, therefore, that premise three demonstrates this conclusion, and so there are two arguments being made here, firstly, that we can exist as corpses, and this in turn allows that we may exist without mental lives.

In general, then, if either conclusion is to be rejected, one must first take issue with a particular reading of premise one: there are dead persons. As Mackie points out, the usual way to challenge this idea is to deny that dead persons are persons, and thereby show that there is no such thing as a dead person in the sense of an actual person that is dead, and not just something left behind when a person dies. In the first instance, Mackie resists this possibility on the grounds that we do actually talk about dead persons, just as we talk about dead cats or dead butterflies, even if we are just talking about remains. This, though, seems like quite a weak argument. After all, there are a lot of expressions in the English language that are not intended to be taken literally. Two common ones are 'the battery's dead' and 'the lightbulb's gone'. To say that a battery is dead is a kind of personification, whereby we compare the life of a battery, though it is by no means biological, with the life of the living being; clearly, though, a battery is not the kind of thing that can be dead, given that it was never alive. Likewise, when we say that the lightbulb has gone, we cannot mean that it is no longer there, merely that it no longer works. To say that there are three dead people in the building after the fire, therefore, could just as easily be a figure of speech, not intended to be taken literally. As such, one who wishes to deny that the dead persons are persons may argue that this is just another way of referring to corpses, or else to no longer existent dead persons.

Two arguments are offered in defence of this view. Firstly, it is suggested that 'dead' is of the same kind of adjective as 'counterfeit', whereby just as counterfeit money is not real money, dead persons are not real

persons. In order to refute this conclusion, Mackie employs *reductio ad absurdum*, moving from dead persons are not really persons, to dead butterflies are not really butterflies, and finally to dead bodies are not really bodies. He takes it as obviously true that no one will want to accept such conclusions. However, there are some who argue that it is in fact obviously true that dead bodies are not really bodies. This is the view of Aristotle, and by extension Aquinas⁶⁶, who sees 'body' as a functional term, such that neither a dead body nor a separated limb may rightly be called 'body' or 'limb'. Instead, the most we can say is that there remains a fleshly substance. As shown by Mackie's lack of engagement with this idea, such a view is not a popular one in contemporary thought. We find, though, that it was a popular view in both Greek and mediaeval times, as reflected by the way language was used. For example, the English word 'corpse', meaning 'dead body' takes its etymology from the Latin word 'corpus', which means 'living body'. Though there is clearly a shift in language use and understanding, this does not necessarily mean either that old definitions should be abandoned or that contemporary intuitions should be assumed to be correct. Neither scholastic nor contemporary animalism (in general) accepts the possibility of dead persons – though there is no issue with corpses of no-longer-existent persons – and it is not obvious that they are incorrect in doing so.

Secondly, the argument is given that dead persons are not persons, though dead cats may be cats, because persons are a special case. As it is, we do not usually count cats in a way that allows feline corpses to be included. People do not include the number of feline corpses when asked how many cats they have, even when the corpses are actually locatable. The somatic animalist seems to have to say either that when we count cats we systematically undercount them, or that when we say we are counting cats, we are not really counting cats, but only living cats. This is surely just reinterpreting the data to save the theory, for neither is a good response to defend the notion of dead persons. Again, though, non-somatic animalists do not need to take this step regarding persons as a special case, but personalism will want to highlight the importance of this point. Dead persons cannot even exist, because dead persons cannot satisfy the psychological requirement for personhood. This is the view of those who take 'person' to be a psychological term, whereby a living being can only be called a person if it is able to satisfy certain psychological criteria, such as rationality, moral reasoning, and introspection. As such, it is clear that persons cannot be dead.

Mackie responds by suggesting that there may be two senses of person. The first, the strong sense of person, applies to those beings satisfying the psychological requirement. He calls them 'Persons'. The second, the weaker sense of person, may apply to all human beings whether they satisfy the psychological requirement or not. From this he accepts that premise one will be false if applying to Persons, but not if applying to persons. The logical step from this point is to assert that Persons and persons must have different persistence criteria. Mackie then attacks the argument that if premise one only refers to persons, this has no relevance to a study on personal identity. He does this by demonstrating that there is a wide and a narrow formulation for determining the persistence conditions of a human being. In the wide sense, one considers what it is for a

⁶⁶ And also Olson, in the case of 'body'. If your body is something there when you are alive, it must cease to exist when you die.

person at one time to be the same something at a different time. Conversely, in the narrow sense, it is asked what is required for a person at one time to be the same *person* as at a different time. Mackie states that it is not obvious that personal identity is restricted to the narrow question, and for this reason, personalism cannot claim that a discussion concerning 'person' in the weaker sense is irrelevant to a study on personal identity.

However, I suggest that this is not really the problem that Mackie should be considering. There may be another way of preventing either of the two conclusions expressed above from being drawn without resorting to the irrelevancy charge. The issue seems to be the move from premise one, asserting that there are dead persons in the weak sense of the word, to premise three, which attempts to argue that the dead 'person' is numerically identical to the living person. Nonetheless, once it is established that premise one is false as referring to persons in the strong sense, it seems that premise three cannot be stated. We have no reason to assume that the dead person is numerically identical to the live Person. Furthermore, if one were to change premise three in order to establish numerical identity between the before-and-after-death persons (weak sense), then this would say nothing about our personal identity as more than human beings, and is again no threat to the personalists. Instead, 'person' would just be equivalent to 'human being', and the most that could be said is that the human being existing before is numerically the same human being existing after, with no significant reference to personhood. This is clearly not the argument Mackie wishes to make, but even it could be shown to be logically valid, it would only make a case against organic animalism, and its denial that we cannot continue to exist (even as human beings) after we die.

Although Mackie discusses the possibility of trying to deny premise two, neither the non-somatic animalist nor the personalist has any reason to want to reject the view that there can be no psychological continuity between the living person and whatever is left after death. We shall therefore assume premise two to be correct and move on to premise three. Returning to the original idea, it is claimed that the person before death is numerically identical to the person after death. As Mackie states, one may generally accept animalism, and still take issue with premise three. This would be the view of the organic animalist, who sees biological death as the end of any living organism simpliciter. This is known as the termination thesis, which refutes premise three on the basis that the human being before death and the human body after death cannot be numerically identical because death is necessarily the end of a human being's existence *per se*. Once again, Mackie attempts to appeal to common sense in order to find grounds for dismissing the termination thesis. His argument is similar to the above use of *reductio ad absurdum*, where he states that if human beings cease to exist when they die, so too do other living organisms, such that it is no longer true that the butterfly collector has actual butterflies in his glass cases; the butterflies ceased to exist when they died. As we saw earlier, this conclusion is scarcely as implausible as it might seem; the fact that he says there are *n* butterflies in the case does not obviously imply that the things in the case are genuine butterflies. Mackie's issue with the termination thesis, then, is with the idea that life should be a necessary condition of being a particular organism. This is contested.

At this point, Mackie mentions three arguments in favour of the termination thesis, but he does not do more than name them. We shall, therefore, turn to a paper by Feldman (2000)⁶⁷. The first, known as the Argument from Definition, takes a particular meaning of death, ‘the annihilation of a living organism’, to argue that because the animal dies at the same time as that same animal is annihilated, animals must go out of existence at death. Although the argument is valid, it is not very convincing. The argument is somewhat question-begging in how it understands the phrase ‘the animal dies at time *t*’. Secondly, and related in terms of definition, is the Argument from Personality. Likewise, it is argued that because persons necessarily have first-person perspective (‘Person’ under Mackie’s definition), they must cease to exist when they die. Again, one could argue, as Mackie does above, that this assumes only one definition of ‘person’, and this cannot be established.

Finally, then, and most significantly, is the Argument from Dualism. Such a view will always be dismissed on principle by a materialist, on the grounds that there is no sense in which a human being is partly composed of an immaterial soul/mind. However, given Feldman’s response, he is clearly assuming a more Cartesian sense of soul/mind, such that the notion of lower animals and plants having souls is supposed to sound ridiculous. This though, is not necessary. Instead, we might appeal to a biological account of living organisms, whereby death has a real effect on the individual cells making up each being. It is, therefore, completely untrue that a living being is biologically similar (and therefore qualitatively identical) to whatever remains after that being has just died. Even seconds after death, we know that a number of cells will already have died, the rest ceasing to function over the next 24 to 48 hours. This, then, may loosely be seen as a form of dualism, but only in the sense that there is more than one kind of ‘thing’ existing in a living organism, which does not exist in a corpse. Apart from biological matter, there is what we might call the life principle or force, the Aristotelian sense of soul, without which the most we can say is that *a part* of the animal/plant still exists.

Another reason a more dualistic understanding should be considered more in line with common sense than is suggested, is that, although we might talk about a generic dead person in the same way as a living person, for example, ‘Mr Bloggs has died and we’re burying him tomorrow’, such language is less favourable when we are speaking about ourselves. We might hear someone say, ‘when I am dead and buried...’, but anyone who believes in any kind of afterlife will not think it is he who shall be buried or cremated, just his body, not him but rather a part of him, while he either ceases to exist or goes on to heaven say. The only reason I can see that we might speak of the dead person being buried when it is not us, and only the body being buried when it is, is that the former is a convention of language, and does not reflect how we actually view physical death. Whether or not we believe in the afterlife, though, we believe that the ‘dead person’ “is no longer with us”, “is gone”, “has gone the way of all mortal beings”, and so on. We do not say any of these things about the corpse we have not yet buried, for it remains.

⁶⁷ Feldman, Fred (2000)

Having discussed the three arguments for the termination thesis by Feldman, we shall look back at Mackie's discussion for further insights. The first argument in favour of the termination thesis that Mackie rejects concerns John Locke's understanding of biological organisms as necessarily living in accordance with their persistence conditions. Mackie suggests that Locke can be respected for his views without the need to accept his conclusion regarding our persistence conditions. His response, however, seems to be somewhat question begging. The termination thesis is rejected on the basis that our persistence conditions have less to do with continued life and more to do with the organisation of constituent parts. Furthermore, his justification for this understanding seems to be built on a false premise. It is not true that in the case of a dead organism "this organisation of constituent parts remains sufficiently nearly intact" (p. 237). Instead, all the cells in the dead organism come to differ from those of the live organism in that they do not have intact membranes. How then can the criterion of being sufficiently nearly intact be met?

Finally, then, Mackie concludes with these words:

For we are human beings; and there are no adequate reasons for abandoning the ordinary view that living human beings can become, and hence continue to exist as, dead human beings" (p. 239).

Nonetheless, 'becoming' does not obviously imply 'continuing to exist as', so it seems that Mackie views the situation as all or nothing, and has not considered the possibility that what is left after death is neither a dead human being nor something else altogether, but instead a part of a human being – that human being's body. As shown by our discussion on the concept 'body', this view is not compatible with scholastic animalism as it currently stands. However, there is no reason that I can see why an organic animalist or even a personalist could not view the situation in this way. There is something left after the death of the human being, but it is not that human being – merely an empty shell, biologically distinct from a living human body. For Aquinas, it is matter with a different form – 'human corpse-ness' – only possible to reanimate by the re-infusion of the person's soul by God on the Last Day, but even the contemporary animalist may view it simply as matter with a certain different composition.

In conclusion, then, it seems that somatic animalism has even less chance of offering a plausible and theologically standard account of the afterlife than organic animalism does. Although a biological animal survives its own death, it may only persist in the form of a corpse, and is therefore unable to be reanimated in a different body, as with reincarnation. It might be possible to explain the Christian idea of bodily resurrection, but only if we allow the person to exist as a lifeless corpse, and nothing more, prior to resurrection, and this is not perhaps what is usually understood by St Paul's description of the pre-resurrection believer having 'fallen asleep'.

Let us put this aside for now, though, and consider another important aspect of the animalist position: the meaning of personhood.

§2.2 – Contemporary Animalism and Persons

Persons and Personhood

This second section aims to look at the concept of personhood from the perspective of the contemporary animalist. Commitment to human personhood as a necessary property of human beings is not required of the animalist in general, but given that most accept that we are, at least currently, human persons, there is a question of how this is to be understood. This discussion is divided into three subsections. The first will consider persons and personhood in a general sense, looking at to whom (or even what) the terms may be applied and the reasons why we might not want to apply them in certain cases. From here, I will discuss Locke's forensic use of 'person' and arguments for distinguishing between the man (the human animal/being) and the person. This is one account of what it means for a human animal to be a human person that is open to the animalist, though unlike Locke, as we shall see, the animalist wishes to identify 'I' with the animal and not the person. The second and more common response is that which regards 'person' as a phase sortal term, as is Olson's understanding of what it means to say that 'I am a person', that is, 'I am an animal that is currently a person'. Having identified the issues with a phase sortal approach to personhood, I will consider other possibilities for how the animalist might regard a human being's personhood. All this, though, relies on a clear understanding of what is required for something to be a person. This we turn to now.

As discussed in the last chapter, 'person' is a term usually applied to two types of being: human and divine, that is, angels and the Trinity. Even those who do not believe in divine persons tend to accept that there is nothing in the definition that makes personhood exclusively a property of humankind. What, then, does the concept refer to?

'Person' comes from the Latin *persona* (Greek, *prosopon*) – literally 'mask' or 'face' (developed to mean 'a role'). The word was applied to the masks worn by actors, to change between characters, in ancient times. One would simply take on another role by changing one's mask. According to Peter Hacker (2007), the question of what a person is, is central to our thought about ourselves, our nature, and our legal and moral status (p. 285), and therefore to our understanding of our status as human beings generally. This said, the statement 'all human beings are persons' is clearly not as tautologous as it might first appear. While *persona* extended to the Roman court of law, to speak of the relations between human beings, with reference to legality and morality, slaves were not included in this category of 'legal persons'.⁶⁸ Instead they were merely 'things', without any rights. This classical usage, then, seems to stem from the ancient sense of *persona* as a mask or role, where a person is one with the capacity to perform legal acts (Schulz, 1951, p. 71). Later, there seemed to be more emphasis on owning property and having legal rights, from which slaves were excluded.

⁶⁸ Though, according to Gaius (cited in Schulz, 1951), during classical times, all human beings, including slaves, were considered *personae*.

Unlike Roman law, modern usage allows for no such legal distinction between human persons and human non-persons, at least between birth and death. But even though both the baby in the womb and the PVS patient have some sort of rights, this does not necessarily make them persons. Neither is there generally a distinction between human persons and non-human persons⁶⁹, at least with regard to ‘natural persons’, and in the case of the Trinity, though for legal and business matters, the term can also apply to ‘juridical persons’. In this case, we do not refer exclusively to individuals, but also to businesses and corporations, which are treated by law as if they were persons, possessing legal rights and duties. Although this is standard usage, it lacks any philosophical significance, and so at this point, I feel it is worth stating that our study here will be with regard to ‘natural persons’, or ‘persons’ as a forensic term defined by Locke (1624) as “appropriating actions and their merit; and so belongs only to intelligent agents, capable of a law, and happiness, and misery” (*Essays II*, Chapter XXVII, §26), and not to any such other things that we happen to term ‘persons’.

As has been suggested, there does seem to be a distinction between a human being and a person, such that humanity (human being-hood) and personhood are distinct properties. Although, allowing for non-human persons does not mean that there are humans that are not persons. Even if we rule out juridical persons, we may still want to assign the term ‘person’ in the interests of rights and responsibilities, perhaps in the case of higher-order animals, for example primates, or even unassign it, as Peter Singer (2011) suggests, with regard to new-born babies or even the mentally handicapped (p. 74). Controversial though this might be, these ethical considerations come down to one’s definition of what makes a being a person; chimpanzees are seen as rational and self-conscious, whereas the new-born or severely mentally handicapped is not seen to meet these criteria. However, whether Singer is correct or not, it seems that it is no more obviously true that all persons are human beings than that all human beings are persons.

Locke and the Man/Person Distinction

This is the view of John Locke, for whom the terms ‘human being’ or ‘man’ and ‘person’ do not have the same definition. Although Locke is not an animalist, several features of his theory are embraced by those who are. The identity of man, according to Locke (1624), consists in nothing but a “participation of the same continued life” (ibid, §6). Contemporary animalists often accept the Lockean view that animals and more broadly organisms have, as it were, ‘proprietary persistence conditions’, and that those conditions are to be understood in terms of parts of the organism taking part in the same biological life. Furthermore, for man, unlike person, there is a need for an organised body; a man is “an animal of such a certain form” (ibid, §8). Locke goes on to state that the nature of matter places no restrictions on the same spirit (one individual immaterial substance)⁷⁰ being united with different bodies, but this just makes the outward appearance even less relevant for the identity of the ‘same continued life’, perhaps leaving the body merely as a means by which the man is experienced and identified one day to the next, in everyday usage, as the same ‘person’.

⁶⁹ There have been cases where primates have been given non-human person status for the sake of rights against certain forms of testing. It is not necessary that they be persons of course, merely that the law regarding rights perhaps should be stretched to other living things, not just human beings.

⁷⁰ ibid, §25

However, Locke states that although in the ordinary way of speaking ‘man’ and ‘person’ refer to the same substance, the concepts of ‘spirit’, ‘man’ and ‘person’ are all distinct. ‘Person’ alone, therefore, is defined thus:

[...] a thinking intelligent being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing, in different times and places; which it does only by that consciousness which is inseparable from thinking, and, as it seems to me, essential to it [...] (ibid, §9).

This distinction between ‘man’ and ‘person’ denies the idea that human animals are rational in virtue of being human. Instead, human animals have one set of persistence conditions, and persons another. The former, then, continue when the same life continues, a view that is not dissimilar to the (organic) animalist account, whereas the latter’s persistence depends on the sameness of a rational being. For Locke, then, ‘person’ is a sortal concept; both accounts hold that ‘person’ determines the persistence conditions of its instances, or rather, persons have personhood essentially.

Non-Essential Persons – The Phase Sortal Approach

It is precisely this that is denied by Olson and Mackie, as well as those animalists of the belief that animality is an essential property, and personhood is not. Animalists differ in that most ground persistence on continued life and others on bodily structure, but all reject the psychological approach to personal identity. This speaks of a connection between persons at different times according to which persistence is based on properties of mind, such as memory and connected first-person experience. This view is taken to be in conflict with persistence according to more bodily criteria (that which Olson calls the biological approach), and so animalists generally exclude the idea of ‘person’ as a proper sortal concept. This is the common view, but it is not necessary for one to be an animalist. Instead, human animals may also be considered persons because personhood is a proper accident of human animality. Alternatively, we might say that human animals are persons in virtue of being members of a species whose members typically have certain fancy psychological properties attributed to personhood. The most popular account, however, seems to be that which considers ‘person’ as a phase sortal, such that personhood is an accidental property of human animals. This is anti-personalism. We shall discuss this idea firstly, including why Olson and others choose to accept it, and then consider whether there are further interpretations with more favourable conclusions.

For Olson, then, being a person is equivalent to having certain mental properties, such as, rationality, intelligence and self-consciousness, and perhaps also moral responsibility and free will (2003, p. 320). This has two important implications. Firstly, not all persons are necessarily human. As was explained above, angels and deities would fit into this category, and some suggest also advanced future robots and even other animals. There is no reason why this should worry us though; it is surely for this reason that we have the designation ‘human’ person. The other implication, however, seems to make Olson’s form of animalism

incompatible with personalism and generally unpopular: not all humans are necessarily persons. Given the requirements for a being to have personhood, the latter will not be sufficient for the former. Instead, personhood, like teenager-hood, is something that applies to beings at some times but not others, that is, a property that individuals do have, and a fortiori could have, at some but not all the times at which they exist. A human being becomes a teenager at thirteen and then ceases to be one after turning twenty, but the loss of this property, that is, teenager-hood, has no effect on the persistence of that human being. Likewise, humans become persons sometime during foetal development, and remain persons just in case they continue to have all the relevant psychological properties (Olson, 1997, chapter 2; Olson, 2003, p. 326). So instead of treating 'person' as a proper sortal term, personhood is taken to be functional kind; the possession of the property depends not on what something is, but on what it does.

Furthermore, while for Olson, my ceasing to have the necessary mental properties causes me to cease to be a person, but continue as an animal, for a personalist, such a loss would constitute the end of my existence, while the human animal that was previously connected with me in whatever way, may live on. Nonetheless, the definition of 'person' accepted by both theorists is very similar. Lynne Rudder Baker, for example, defines a person as a being with first-person perspective, which seems to equate to self-consciousness. She writes: "a person has a complex mental property: a first-person perspective that enables one to conceive of one's body and mental states as one's own" (2000, p. 4). It seems then that a human person could lose any or all of the properties of rationality, intelligence, moral responsibility and free will, and still exist, provided these are not essential to being self-conscious. It may be the case that this is part of what it means to have first-person perspective, such that one would not lose these properties and keep one's first-person perspective. Moral responsibility, for example, is a consequence of free will, which in turn results from self-consciousness. Additionally, rationality is often described in terms of intellect, according to which one recognises his own individuality, as an agent of activity and responsibility. I would be tempted to suggest, therefore, that the two accounts of what it means to be a person amount to the same thing; the difference is the type of concept. As it is, for Olson, the precise nature of personhood is not central to his argument and therefore not really discussed.

So why does animalism commonly regard personhood as a non-essential property? In the first instance, this is a consequence of holding the view that persons necessarily have certain psychological properties – a view shared by personalism, but to different ends. In the second, this is the result of the biological approach to personal identity, whereby the property of being biologically human (a member of the species *Homo sapiens*) is taken to be essential. If the continuation of the biological life-processes in our living body is sufficient for our existence, personhood will only be essential to us, provided these life-processes cannot continue without our going on being persons. However, given that those psychological properties typically associated with personhood seem not to be necessary for human existence anyway, personhood itself must be a non-essential property, and human animals could continue to exist as non-persons. The alternative is assumed to be the denial that 'person' could be a proper sortal term. Olson writes: "Thus, anyone who

assumes that *person* is a substance concept⁷¹ is in effect assuming the Psychological Approach” (ibid, p. 29). This he denies, and so he takes it that ‘person’ must be a phase sortal, and thereby human beings may both begin their lives and end them as something other than persons. However, just because personhood could be a temporary property of persons, it does not follow that personhood could be a temporary property of *human* persons. It might be that human persons are permanently and essentially persons, even if other persons are not. Furthermore, as mentioned previously, Olson’s view does not block an account of personhood according to which personhood is a property accident of human being-hood. Neither need to resist the idea that persons need only belong to a kind whose members typically are persons in order to be persons.

Nonetheless, Olson does not actually see it as a problem that I could continue as something other than a person. He gives two examples where it seems more natural to believe this than not (2003, p. 320). The first is the case of the loved one in a PVS. Here, brain activity has all but completely ceased, and one might conclude that the human being no longer exists as a person. What he cannot say, though, is that he is dead, given the continuing functioning of his body. So, it seems that it might be that a human animal exists without being a person. Then again, there is the case of the early term foetus. Just like the PVS patient, the embryo shows sign of little or no brain activity, but it is definitely alive. It is also undeniably human, given its genetic make-up. And yet many would not want to call this creature a person.

This, in itself, does not seem to be a problem. What is troubling, though, is instead the implication of the phase sortal approach. These examples merely suggest that human beings start off as non-persons, become persons, and then cease to be persons again. However, the phase sortalists have left it open for human beings to lose and regain their personhood several times in a lifetime. Occasionally, PVS patients actually slip back into lighter stages of unconsciousness, and even wake up to be perfectly alright again. What, then, can we say about the person in the bed all this time? Olson, it seems, would want to believe he was originally a human animal and a human person. He then existed as merely a human animal, before becoming a human person again, though again there is no reason why psychologically properties associated with personhood must be occurrent. Given that his objections to those who deny animalism are based upon common sense and intuitions, this does not make a very compelling argument. It is certainly not the intuitive view that the patient stops being a person while he is in a vegetative state, especially as such states are not always permanent.

However, these ideas are not intrinsic to animalism itself, and it is in fact a mistake to assume that one is required to reject the concept of ‘person’ as a proper sortal kind in order to deny the psychological approach. The two ideas are not directly linked. A number of options are open to the animalist who wishes to deny that psychological properties are necessary for persistence. Firstly, regarding the concept itself, it seems that it is not unreasonable to suggest that instead of persons having certain psychological properties, they need only

⁷¹ Or a proper sortal concept

potentially have these properties. As a result, although the undeveloped foetus may still not be called a person, the comatose patient does lay claim to that designation. Furthermore, given that some babies are born with an underdeveloped brain, such that they may never achieve more than the potential for personhood (under this definition), this idea is much more in line with our intuitions about persons than the previous one. According to the view that ties personhood to the occurrent possession of these properties, such a human being would not be regarded as a person, even as an adult.

Secondly, one could see personhood, not as a property satisfied by the above conditions, but as a property of an individual, in virtue of the facts concerning the fancy psychological properties that members of that individual species typically have. After all, it might be the case that all possible persons belong to some species. Given that it is characteristic of the species *Homo sapiens*, for example, to have certain psychological properties, it might be that all that is required for one to be a person is to be a member of that species, at least for human persons. On this view, anything that is considered to be a human being is also a person, be it a human embryo or a PVS patient. Likewise, any biological organism not considered to be a human being, cannot be a person, though we do not really want to be committed to the idea that all persons are human. Instead, we might say it is enough to be a person to belong to a species whose members are considered to be persons. Once again, a biological account of persistence can be maintained, without appeal to the phase sortal approach, and thereby anti-personalism.

Another possibility, which may include the previous suggestion, according to which human beings still have biological persistence conditions, and human animality is seen as a permanent and essential property of humans, takes personhood to be a proper accident of human animality. If a living being has enough of the properties associated with human animality to be a human being, as a consequence, it also has the property of personhood. As discussed above, animalists do not need to hold that human beings are *merely* animals – just that they are animals. If, then, an animalist can say that human beings are not merely animals, but animals that essentially have certain properties that non-human animals do not have, then they can say that we are fundamentally animals that essentially have certain features that guarantee personhood. This is the view of Thomas Aquinas, which we have called scholastic animalism, whereby being a human animal implies having an intellective soul, and thus being a human person. It is not of course necessary for the animalist to embrace the whole of the scholastic animalist position – he may still prefer a more materialist conception of human animality – but in essentials, there is no room for a human animal to lose its personhood, or begin existence without it. Neither, is it necessary that a human being has the standard psychological properties associated with personhood, unless it can be shown that they are also necessary for our persistence *per se*, as would be denied by both organic and somatic animalists.

§2.3 – Persistence: An Animalist Account

An Overview

In this final section, we shall be looking in more detail at the persistence conditions of human persons according to animalism, and assessing the implications of the non-identity claims about human personhood and human animality. The section will be divided into the following parts. This first subsection addresses the issues of persistence and identity for the animalist. In the second and third, a human being's identity as the same animal at all times in which he exists, as is the animalist position, will be considered in the light of two classic problems. The former is known as the foetus problem, which, at first glance appears to be more of a issue for the personalist than the animalist, but which requires an explanation for how the early-term embryo/foetus could be said to be numerically identical to the living infant, despite arguably not being an animal. The latter concerns the possibility of a disembodied mind, the acceptance of which would undermine the animalist's claim that a human being's persistence is necessarily tied to its animality. I will highlight the possible responses for the animalist, and offer a suggestion for how he might side-step the problem. Finally, we come to the conclusion that although animalism has something positive to offer the discussion of the nature of human persons, it cannot provide a full account.

No matter which side of the debate one subscribes to – that is, a somatic or an organic account – then, with regard to persistence and identity, animalists still require whatever is me at time t_2 to be the same animal as whatever was me at time t_1 for identity to be established. As Olson (1997) points out, there is no requirement for the animalist that the subject at time t_2 also to be a person (p. 98). He makes reference to the embryo that he was before his birth, and argues that the embryo and he are numerically identical, but that the former is not a person. Therefore, it is not true that they are the same person, and identity of this sort cannot be established. The question of what makes me the same person at time t_2 as t_1 is, therefore, a different one from the above question concerning the identity of me simpliciter. Interestingly, the former is the more usual construction of the personal identity question, but for supporters of animalism and those against a purely psychological⁷² answer, this question rather misses the point (as Mackie suggests). Instead, as persistence depends solely on the continuing exemplification of a being's essential properties, whether one continues to exist or not will not necessarily be enough to determine whether one remains the same person. Animalism requires the continuation of the same life/structure for identity, and so either at death or, as the second camp animalists would have it, when the organism loses a significant proportion of its structure, identity is lost.

Animalism and the Foetus Problem

However, this is not the most popular view of the matter, shown by the fact that the majority of commentators on the personal identity question do not wish to separate a human being's persistence from his personhood. This results in the view that one's existence cannot be traced back beyond the point of

⁷² That is, those who believe personal identity is explained by psychological matters, such as memory. Person x is identical with person y if and only if the two are psychologically continuous

significant mental processing, and thereby denies that one could be numerically identical with an early-term foetus. I suggest that this rather begs the question.

The above account, called the Standard View by Olson (1997), holds that no person could ever have been an early-term foetus.⁷³ Some have even taken this further to suggest that even a young infant cannot be said to have the sufficient mental capacities for memory, rationality and self-consciousness to be considered a person, and therefore that a person could never have been an infant either. All this is built upon personalist ideas that, firstly, each of us is a person essentially, and thereby could not have existed at any time as something that is not a person, and secondly, that personhood requires possession of certain occurrent psychology properties, or at least possession of parts that potentially have such properties. What then can be said of the foetus with which we share our biology? Different answers have been offered to solve this mystery, but they all either leave us with further mysteries or contain inherent inconsistency. One such example is the idea that a foetus can become a person by being a part of a continuous process from foetus to person (*ibid*, p. 99). However, this does not address the problem, for when we say that we were once children, infants and fetuses, we do not mean that we were part of a process from one stage to the next; this is a claim of genuine numerical identity. Furthermore, as Olson points out, it is a claim backed up by biology, and with our intuitions about ourselves (p. 95). Philosophically, too, the alternative looks deeply weird, though it is generally considered to be much less contestable that we were once children and infants than that we were once fetuses. Perhaps Olson's point demonstrates that this ought not to be the case.

In answer to what happened to the foetus, the proponent of the Standard View gives two possible answers: it ceases to be, or it comes to share its matter with the person, while being something other than a person itself. The former is surely the least attractive. In the first instance, there is a living being that develops up to a point, and then goes out of existence as soon as it gains the ability to acquire rational thought, almost as though this change causes its demise. Such an absurd view is clearly at odds with biology and common sense. Furthermore, this idea is surely open to all the same criticism as Aquinas' theory of rational ensoulment, whereby the embryo ceases to exist when the intellectual soul is infused, endowing it with reason, to be replaced by a human foetus, now a human person. I need not repeat the arguments here, but let us suffice it to say that the process is riddled with metaphysical issues about the identity of the two distinct beings, and what it is for something to be a substance.

In the latter case, the being that is the foetus (where 'foetus' is seen as a phase sortal) does survive the development from human embryo through to human adult, but it never becomes a person, and as such, it can never become me. Instead, I share the same matter with this human animal, and there are two beings rather

⁷³ Olson specifies a five-month foetus here, but given advances in science and medicine, we now know it to be false that a five-month foetus demonstrates no mental functioning. Foetuses of twenty-two weeks gestation are now beginning to survive very premature births with normal physical and mental development. The reader should bear in mind that this paper was written according to embryology of over twenty years ago.

than one. The upshot of this is that we are not animals, not members of the species *Homo sapiens*, and not organisms, despite being alive and composed of living tissue. This, though, just is what the personalist believes, according to which our existence is tied to our mental continuation. Furthermore, such an idea does not obviously seem false; it is not seen to be impossible that a human being could outlast his physical body.

But there is another problem. Whatever the relationship between the person and the being with which he shares a decomposition, the fact that there *are* two beings makes it doubtful whether we are even persons at all. After all, both you and the animal with which you share a decomposition think (assuming that animals do think) that you are a person, but one of you – apparently the animal – is wrong. How, then, do you know you are the person and not the animal, when they are neurologically and behaviourally identical? (p. 102). For Shoemaker and others, animals cannot be said to be thinkers because thinkers cannot have purely biological persistence conditions, in the same way that statues are more than just matter. While it is hard to deny that animals do actually think, given that their brains show activity when responding to stimulus just as humans' do, it is quite another matter whether this kind of thinking is sophisticated enough for what we might call self-consciousness and introspection, neither of which does it seem obvious that animals' minds are advanced enough to engage in. This, though, may not be a matter of persistence conditions, but rather a comment on the species barrier between humans and other animals. Perhaps human beings alone are able to make judgements about what they are. If this is true, it is hard to see how there could be two thinking beings where you are, if one of them is an animal. Nonetheless, the notion of a person appearing from nowhere to share a decomposition with the human foetus is puzzling at best. It almost makes the person, and not just the properties associated with personhood, emergent in some way from the human foetus. The idea of emergent properties is a popular one in the philosophy of mind, but it seems hard to defend a view whereby an actual being emerges on account of the sophistication of the animal with which it comes to share a decomposition, especially if that being is said to be you, and its persistence conditions your persistence conditions.

It seems that neither the Standard View nor its critics can reasonably answer the foetus problem with any appeal to an essentialist account of human personhood. The Standard View leaves us with puzzles as to how a being can just cease to exist and a new one come in its place, or else join in some way to create two beings of different kinds, whereby we cannot even be sure that we are essentially persons. On the other side, as Olson has it, 'person' is just a stage that human animals go through at some point after foetal development first begins.

There is, however, a third option, whereby personhood may be essential to us without the need for certain mental properties to be occurrent. This we discussed in the last section, but with regard to the foetus problem, we now have some new insights. Given that personhood is seen as a consequence of human animality, one must conclude that the foetus becomes a person at whichever point it is considered to be a complete member of the species, possibly around conception, or even implantation, given the possibility of twinning up to this point. It is therefore irrelevant whether its brain is even potentially developed enough for

cognitive processing. Although this is in one sense Aquinas' take on human animality and personhood, whereby the two are inseparably linked, scholastic animalism does actually result in the same position with regards to the foetus problem as the Standard View. Unlike personalism, though, Aquinas accepts the conclusions Olson draws about what happens to the original being, that is, the disappearance theory. As was discussed in the previous chapter, these may not be favourable, but Aquinas' view stands in favour of the original being ceasing to exist, and the resulting person therefore being numerically non-identical with it. With regard to non-occurrent personalism, on the other hand, any problems with the Biological View will apply to it, while those of the Standard View may be disregarded. Let us look at the Biological View in more detail.

Given that we are human animals essentially, the notion of each of us as a foetus (or even an embryo) is no more problematic than that of each of us as a child. To be human animals is to be members of the species *Homo sapiens*, which is a property possessed by all humans throughout their lives. Despite an early term foetus having none of the physical make-up of an adult human being, genetically it is already human. This should not really surprise us, though, given that it came from the fertilisation of a human ovum by a human sperm cell. What other sort of being could it be? Olson actually does not want to argue that the zygote is numerically identical to me until it has finished the type of cell division known as cleavage, on the view that it is not properly a human organism until then; this he takes to be at around two weeks. Cleavage is known to actually be completed by the end of day four, but again, twinning can occur up to implantation, at around day fourteen, so perhaps this would be a better cut-off date. It seems puzzling to say that anything is a single human organism, if it still has the potential to become twins or even triplets. In terms of life-processes too, the pre-implantation zygote does not actually take in further nutrients until it implants into the uterine lining. Furthermore, according to ethical guidelines, embryos used for research cannot be studied for longer than two weeks, as this is the latest that it is possible for the embryo to divide in the case of monozygotic twins; from this point on, the embryo is considered an individual. We do not know exactly how old the embryo is before it has its own life, but according to the usual animalist framework, that is when each human animal begins to exist. This then is the Biological View.

But does this really solve the foetus problem or just create a new one? Surely as soon as one says that something exists before me that is not me, the problem remains. Does it become me? Does it just cease to exist? Olson, it seems, will want to say that the situation is different when it concerns the move from a non-animal to an animal than an animal non-person to a person, and there are reasons for making this move. With mitosis over, the now embryo no longer has the potential to be anything more than one organism. Not only is it now a separate living organism, but it might be said to have such a different set of potentialities, it is no longer the same substance. Comparison can be made with the two gametes at the moment of fertilisation, which cease to exist to be replaced by the zygote. On the other hand, neither of these changes happens fast enough for us to state when the new being actually comes into existence. Fertilisation takes place over a few hours, while implantation can take several days. There is not an exact moment that the potentialities of the

embryo change, such that twinning can even occur partially, resulting in conjoined twins. As such, Olson's notion of 'human-being-dough' is not so unintuitive. Until implantation, there is the potential for the 'dough' to make one or more embryos, and in the same way that baked dough cannot be further divided, the implanted embryo can no longer become more than one organism. Just as the actual dough disappears in the oven to be replaced by cookies, say, the zygote/blastocyst, disappears to be replaced by one or more human embryos, as separate living organisms. This account does seem to fit with current knowledge of embryology, and yet it does not work so well in cases of single births. The properties of the zygote change as it becomes an embryo, but do we really want to say it ceases to exist to be replaced by an embryo? Perhaps it would be more natural to say that the being gains the property of being a single living organism, but this is not Olson's terminology.

So, is there any solution to the foetus/embryo problem without making claims about the zygote/embryo that we may not be justified in making? Peter Unger (cited in Olson, 1997) offers a suggestion. Put simply, this is the idea that it is possible for something to exist without certain non-trivial properties until it possesses them, and then be unable to exist without them after that point. To apply this to the psychological properties necessary for personhood, therefore, is to say that the being may not require personhood for existence from the beginning of its life, but once it reaches a certain level of development and gains the property of personhood, it cannot persist without continuing to be a person, and presumably its biological persistence conditions as well for the animalist. It is suggested by Olson that this is not a complete picture, and as such, lacks coherence. Given that the being does not have 'personal' criteria until he gains psychological properties, this criterion for identity can only apply to him from the moment he becomes a person. This, then, is not enough to ground persistence in terms of biological continuity. Olson concludes that whatever criteria of identity applied to each of us as a foetus must still apply now and into the future, and vice versa. Beings cannot undergo a change in their criteria of identity from one moment to the next. Olson calls this ontological metamorphosis (p. 105), which suggests that a being's persistence could consist of different things at different times. At best, this is not an attractive view.

However, if it could be shown that there is a clear link between one's biological and psychological persistence conditions, there might be a way of dissolving the incoherence. Understanding of brain activity in PVS patients is still very limited, but we do know that this is often different from the state of one considered to be 'brain dead'. For this reason, then, although the human being can be kept 'alive' on life-support, the loss of self-consciousness and the loss of autonomous life could be said to go hand in hand. Human beings can undergo pretty severe brain damage and still be self-conscious, as we know from coma patients who have recovered, so perhaps self-consciousness, and therefore personhood, is a more primitive notion that it appears. There is no reason to suppose that a human being could continue to be alive without self-consciousness, and if this is true, there would be no grounds for stating that the acquisition of psychological properties, or even true individuality (as with the implanted embryo) should cause us to reject the conclusion that the being at a later stage is numerically identical to the pre-minded embryo. After all, its personhood has

developed like its brainstem, becoming essential to it, though it was not previously. Perhaps, then, Unger's response is not quite as incoherent as it is reported to be, though it must be reinterpreted to avoid contradiction. We might say then that a human being's criteria for identity include that he must have the capacity to develop, or currently have, a brainstem in order to persist. This would then make sense of the science; at best, the zygote only has the capacity to bring about the existence of a creature with the capacity to develop a brainstem. The zygote, therefore, is not numerically identical to the embryo/foetus/infant; it merely equates to Olson's 'human being dough'.

Animalism and the Disembodied Mind

The final and greatest challenge to the animalist position, and addressed by Olson, is that of the metaphysical possibility of a disembodied mind. Two questions concern us:

- a) Could a human mind exist and continue to function apart from the human animal to whom it belonged?
- b) Could a human animal share a decomposition with his mind given the above?

It is generally held that a) is possible, and b) is not, which has some unfortunate consequences. Firstly, in this instance, the mind can outlive the human animal of which it was a part. Secondly, and as a result, the mind continues having experiences that do not belong to the animal to whom it belonged. Nonetheless, subjective experiences must be the experiences of some subject. To whom, then, do they belong? There seem to be three possibilities:

P1) The human person whose mind it is, now no longer a biological living animal

P2) A completely new subject, who did not previously exist

P3) A new subject, previously existing as something that was not the subject of any experiences, e.g. the mind itself

If we accept P1, then we are forced to conclude that human persons are not essentially human animals, given that animals are living organisms, and a brain (or whatever is required for the mind to function) is not. Although Olson does suggest that a human animal may be 'pared down' to its brain and persist, it is hard to see how anything less than a brain, say a cerebrum, could be a human animal. If animalism is true, therefore, P1 is rejected. Nonetheless, for both Olson and Hughes (2015) the idea that a brand-new subject could be the possessor of this mind's thoughts and experiences is deeply weird. Something is clearly lost, not gained (Hughes, 2017 p. 230). Finally, then, we might allow that something already existing has become subjectified. On this interpretation, the mind is the subject of its own thoughts. Furthermore, we might ask whether the mind was always a subject of thoughts, and if so whether those thoughts are the person's. If not, we have the strange scenario whereby something that was not originally consciousness, becomes conscious as a result of the removal of the other parts of the body, though they seem unrelated. If the process were then reversed, we would have to say that the previously conscious brain loses its consciousness to the animal once again, as appears to be Aquinas' theory about last-day resurrection.

None of these options seems to have a good outcome for an animalist. According to animalism, one only continues to exist on the condition that one is a (living) animal. Even somatic animalists cannot allow a person to be reduced to part of the brain, whether or not life does continue. For this reason, animalists seem required to reject the possibility that any continuing life can belong to the human animal whose brain it is, and therefore the first premise. Nonetheless, the conclusion that the original human being has ceased to function, and the thoughts of what was that person's brain do not belong to that person but to a new subject, is very hard to believe. Though the position might help an animalist, most are quick to observe the senselessness of a new subject *ex nihilo*. As Hughes points out, this does not parallel the idea that something has been lost rather than gained. We might also want to question what this new subject is, and where it came from. If, for example, the process were reversed, would the new subject remain, or would the original subject take back control of his brain? For these reasons, P2 should be rejected.

Likewise, P3, which allows the subjectification of a previous non-subject, most likely the mind, gives us a similar problem. Where the person previously thought with his mind, the mind itself is now doing the thinking. Further, the reversal of the process would presumably cause the un-subjectification of the mind, whereby the brain/part of the brain is put back in the person's body, or else in another mindless body. One might wish to argue that the process could not be undone, given that the animal has gone, and what is left is reduced to a subjective mind. On the other hand, if it were, we have to wonder what became of the subjective mind, and why reattachment would stop it functioning separately.

Hughes offers a different solution. This is an adaptation of P1, whereby it is denied that the human person is the human animal. Instead, the human person shares a body with the human animal. Such is an example of coincidence and not identity. This compares with Wiggins' (1968) solution to the Tib and Tibbles problem, but for thinking beings. On Wiggins' view, when Tibbles' tail is removed, the result is neither a new cat nor something already existing becoming a cat. Rather, when Tibbles loses his tail, Tib (originally Tibbles without the tail) becomes a cat-coincider. At the point of separation, then, the animal ceases to exist, while the human person continues having thoughts as it did before. Not only, therefore, is it denied that there is an identity relation between human animals and human persons, but also that human animals are the kind of things that are able to think. This avoids the uncomfortable conclusions associated with P1 to P3, but now we either have to say that we are not the kind of beings that think, or that we are not animals. The former may be more acceptable to the animalist, but it is probably the least palatable. Olson would accept neither. Not only is it hard to believe that we do not think, given that we at least think we do, but it is difficult to say that animals in general do not think. And if they do not, it seems we would have to allow that they too share their bodies with say, feline persons, canine persons and simian persons.

It is for this reason that Olson sees the biological approach as more defensible than the psychological approach. In the final section of chapter 5⁷⁴, he considers the criteria of life for non-human animals, for example, oysters. Not only does the lack of a biological answer leave such a question unanswered, but additionally, it seems to suggest that ‘person’ is not a natural kind, and therefore does not determine the persistence conditions of those beings that fall into it. Likewise, those who reject the biological approach must deny that ‘human being’, ‘animal’ and ‘organism’ are natural kinds (p. 122). This seems like too big a sacrifice. Indeed, Olson states that he has never seen this argued.

As a consequence, then, we might argue that such a reduction could never actually happen. That is to say, there is no good reason to think that a being could be reduced to just its brain or cerebrum and still have thoughts and experiences, at least not on this earth, but more on this later. But is this about the limits of modern science or something more substantial? I suggest the latter. Science, as with the biological approach, sees the persistence of animals in terms of biological life. Even Locke, as a personalist, requires participation of the same continued life for a man to persist. But what is life? Typically defined in terms of the seven life processes or traits, biologists see life as a characteristic, exhibiting physiological functions, such as adaption, reproduction, homeostasis and growth. This is what it is to be an organism. Turning this around, then, if an organism is a natural kind, as we have assumed, it cannot persist without being biologically alive. Furthermore, being alive requires physiological function. In what sense, therefore, is a functioning-but-disembodied cerebrum participating in any kind of biological life? It might be participating in a kind of mental life, but this is insufficient for it to be an organism, as with angels etc. There is no clear connection between having a biological life and having a mental life, so the onus is still on the animalist to deny even the metaphysical possibility of a function, disembodied mind.

Looking at this from a psychological perspective, though, the problem does not go away. Persons are defined according to their functions, and so it is possible to conceive of a person being reduced to just these functions, as a part of the brain. However, persons are living things. When connected to animals, the biological processes that that animal engages in account for the life of that person. But if the person is separated from its biological animal, it remains a mystery as to how that part of the brain can actually be alive. It cannot be participating in the life of the animal because that animal is no more. Its life, therefore, must somehow be its own. How, though, can a separated part of an organism be biologically alive? A heart may survive for a short time before being transplanted, but it does not function as a heart until it is reattached. It seems then that we are expecting too much of the cerebrum to continue to activate life in itself without the organism that made it alive in the first place.

So, what are our choices? As philosophers and biologists, we may claim to have good grounds for rejecting even the metaphysical possibility of the disembodied mind – at least while here on earth – on account of its disconnection with life itself, such that one might survive the loss of limbs and some organs, but not the

⁷⁴ *The Human Animal*

mutilation of the central nervous system, heart, spinal cord, brainstem etc. If, on the other hand, one could come up with a theory of life that may be applied to something non-biologically alive, then this move could be blocked. For example, if one allowed the mind to be wholly immaterial, then its ability to have life could be compared with that of God and angels. As non-biological beings, they cannot be said to be biologically alive, but neither would we call them dead. To go this route though, would be to embrace a kind of theory of human nature somewhat like Aquinas', who allows the soul, and therefore mind, to undergo a complete change in the manner of its existence, such that it can be alive and function apart from a living body. This, though, is perhaps not a comfortable position for any animalist, given that the separated soul/mind is still not an animal. It also would not be very desirable to a materialist, who is therefore charged with finding a whole new definition of life, if indeed he wants to motivate continued existence as a separated cerebrum. Certainly, the consequences of doing so are none too attractive.

Final Thoughts

Animalism, then, although it avoids some of the problems of the purely psychological accounts of persistence, and the non-intuitive notions of human persons as two beings that share parts, does not give a complete picture in conjunction with the popular view anti-personalism. The concept of personhood as a phase sortal seems to result in more issues than it solves, and certainly leads to conclusions that can hardly be said to align themselves closely with common sense, something Olson considers to be very important in these matters. On the other hand, neither animalism nor human animalism is required to view personhood in this way, and yet still correspond with science, which states that we are living beings, specifically human animals, according to our species. Perhaps then, we might say contemporary animalism is half the picture.

Chapter 3: Contemporary Personalism

§3.1 Personalist Ontologies

i. Personalism and Anti-Animalism

Having presented an account of human beings as essentially animals, we turn now to the other side of the debate, that which regards human beings as essentially persons, and even as essentially non-animals. The former is the view of the contemporary personalist. The latter is an additional position held by most personalists: anti-animalism. Our aims with this chapter, then, are to examine the personalist account of the nature of human beings, and to discuss the issues of identity and persistence in the light of these claims. The chapter has two main sections. In the first section, I shall present personalism as a theory about the ontology of human beings and as a theory of identity. From here, I will discuss the three main personalist theorists, namely, Baker, Shoemaker and Parfit, and their differing interpretations of what it is to be a person according to psychological criteria. I shall then analyse the cogency of this school of thought, also known as neo-Lockeanism, when applied to a number of real-life situations concerning the persistence of human persons and animals.

The final section shall focus on the question of persistence in terms of the self. Here, we shall consider what is really important in identity, namely, personal persistence or survival. I will introduce the notion of connected self-consciousness as a response to some of the issues with the personal identity cases, before considering again when each of us actually first existed, and why the foetus problem remains a problem for the personalist who wants to deny that human persons are living organisms.

ii. The Many Faces of Personalism

Unlike animalism, which is understood in roughly the same way across the board, there are many different versions of personalist thinking, even within the same branch of philosophy. What they all have in common though, is a regard for personhood as an essential property of those beings called persons, such that 'person' is considered to be a sortal term. Personalism as a theory of identity, then, reduces the persistence of persons to their personhood, typically in terms of psychological connectedness or continuity, according to what has been called the narrow question: what is required for a person at time t to be the same person as time t_2 ? With regards to human beings, personalists tend to see their position in a contrary light to animalism. While for the latter, we are essentially animals, for the former, it is instead personhood that is considered to be essential to our nature. This chapter, therefore, will discuss an account of personalism according to which human beings are essentially persons, though they may share a decomposition with an animal. It is assumed, under such a view, that 'human person' and 'human animal' are not co-referential terms, but this is not necessary for one to be a personalist. For Aquinas, as we have seen, human personhood and human animality are equally essential to human beings, on the grounds that both terms refer to the same property. He may just

as easily be called a scholastic personalist as a scholastic animalist, therefore. Nonetheless, personalists typically understand persons in such a way that the sense in which human beings are persons is not the same as the sense in which human beings are animals. Animality is at best a temporary property of human beinghood, and human persons share no more than a decomposition with human animals.

Another key aspect of personalism is that it views persons in a particular way. Generally, as with animalists, personalists believe that personhood may be applied to any being actually possessing rationality, self-consciousness, moral reasoning etc. as is considered to be the main difference between human beings and other terrestrial animals. Such properties are usually required to be occurrent for the being to count as a person, but in principle, it is enough for a being to potentially have such capacities to count as a person.

Typically, then, personalists deny the claims of animalism, while subscribing to an account of personhood as an essential property of human beings. While it is not necessary to be anti-animalist in order to be a personalist, the majority of personalists do deny the claim that human beings are permanently and essentially animals. The most they allow is either that ‘we are animals’ as taken loosely, that is, in the non-identity-expressing sense, or that we are animals, but only contingently. A third view, would perhaps deny that human persons even share a decomposition with an animal, say on the grounds that we are purely immaterial beings, but this extreme view is not necessary to regard the properties of human animality and human personhood as incompatible.

The first group, then, allows the phrase ‘we are animals’ to be taken to mean that we are in some way constituted by animals. Instead, we are identical to a person, while sharing a decomposition with an animal. This is the view of Shoemaker, for whom we ‘are’ animals constitutionally and not predicatively, and so our ‘being’ animals has no effect on our persistence conditions. We also find this account defended by Lynne Rudder-Baker, who does not call herself a personalist, but probably is one really.⁷⁵ For Baker, ‘person’ is a permanence sortal, or what she terms an ‘ontologically significant’ term; necessarily, personhood is a permanent property of persons, such that our persistence *per se* is our persistence as persons.

Additionally, one could be a personalist in the sense of holding that human beings have both personhood and animality, while believing personhood to be essential to human persons, and animality only accidental. This would be the reverse of Olson’s account. While Olson believes that it is animality that is essential to our nature as human beings, and regards personhood as a contingent property of human beings, one in favour of the compatible-but-separate view of the properties of animality and personhood would believe the reverse: we are essentially persons, but may (accidentally or contingently) be animals too. ‘Human animal’, therefore, would be a phase sortal, which applies, or at least could apply, to an individual at some but not all of the times at which that individual exists. Although opposite in one sense, the two views have in common the

⁷⁵ See Degrazia, David (2005) , p. 34

idea that the terms ‘person’ and ‘animal’ refer to the same being simultaneously. Therefore, ‘human person’ and ‘human animality’, though they are not equivalent (as with scholastic animalism), have overlapping intensions.

However, despite the difference in how personalism might account for the properties of human animality and human personhood, it is more common to find the debate, not between animalism and personalism, but between animalism and neo-Lockeanism, which is committed to a psychological criterion of personal identity, as opposed to the biological approach. Both, though, are relevant, and so there are two discussions to be had. In the former case, our concerns lie with the ontological significance of the properties of human beings, according to the type of category we might put ourselves in. In the latter case, conversely, the focus is personal identity, that is, the question of what is required for each of us to persist through time and change. For animalism, our identity over time is seen as a consequence of our physical or biological continuity; we persist only if we remain animals. On the other hand, neo-Lockeans, who may include proponents from any of the three personalist camps discussed above, ground personal identity on psychological continuity or connectedness. In this chapter, therefore, we shall first consider the personalist ontology as regarding persons, and then look again at the personal identity question, this time from a neo-Lockean perspective.

iii. Personalism and the Criteria for Personhood

To regard personhood as an essential property is a universal principle within personalism, such that all personalists see it as essential that we human beings never existed, and never will exist, as anything other than persons. Nonetheless, personalist ontology is not in agreement about whether or not we currently exist as anything more than persons. Some personalists consider it to be a contingent truth that we are in some sense animals. Others are not committed to an account of human animality as a non-essential property, but are nonetheless sympathetic to the possibility. Still others deny that anything that is a person could be an animal.

I. Baker’s Constitution View: Non-Essential Animality

With regards to the first, Lynne Rudder Baker, who professes herself a materialist, offers a compatibilist account of what it is to be a human being/person. For Baker, human persons are material beings, part of the animal kingdom, but with the uniqueness reserved only for persons. This argument comes about as a result of holding two prior principles: we are the subjects of experience, and we belong to the natural world of organisms, as biology claims (Baker, 2002, p. 371). Interestingly, holding these two principles alone is not enough to put one in either the personalist or the animalist camp. Aquinas, for example, with a foot in each, though he would deny Baker’s account of persistence according to solely psychological criteria (except in the sense that the psychological criteria depend on the biological criteria), would have no issue with either of these two statements. He, though, would take them literally, while Baker would wish to qualify what is designated by each statement. This is the crux of her account. To say that we are the subjects of experience is to say that we, as human persons, are in relation to the world in such a way as to directly experience it.

However, the sense in which we belong to the natural world of organisms is not as simple. It is not that we, as human persons, are natural organisms, but that we, as human persons, share a constitution with an animal that is a natural organism. Another way to put this is to say that human persons share a decomposition with an animal. This is not a relation of identity. As a result, although Baker says that we are animals, it is easy to see why Olson and others deny that she is any kind of animalist. It is also unsurprising that so many replies have passed between Baker and Olson on the matter of human persons, and thus why each has accused the other of misrepresenting his or her views. Baker, for example, states explicitly that she understands the terms ‘human animal’ and ‘human body’ to be interchangeable, such that your body, which is a human animal, constitutes you, while for Olson, there is an identity relation between a human animal and a human being, but not between that human being and his body. This is not enough to be an animalist, unless your body is all you are.

For Baker, then, personhood is essential to our nature, but animality is not. The sense in which we are animals is one of constitution, such that animals and persons are distinct beings occupying the same space and made of the same stuff. Baker compares the constitution of persons by animals with that of DNA by strings of genes, or rivers by water molecules. She takes this to be a normal relation we find elsewhere, and not one of a complex metaphysical nature, although the wording is perhaps less than typical. Instead, we might say that the person and the animal are composed of the same stuff, or for a materialist, the same molecules, just as DNA is composed of the same stuff as strings of genes.

It seems, however, that these relations are not the same. While persons may continue to exist as something other than animals, in accordance with the non-essential nature of animality, DNA cannot exist as something other than strings of genes, or rivers as other than molecules of liquid. This is because DNA just is strings of genes and rivers just are molecules of liquid, in the sense of identity, but this does not apply to persons and animals. Furthermore, while animality is only part of what it means to be a person, and of course non-essentially, strings of genes are sufficient for DNA. Nonetheless, the issue here may just be on account of the examples chosen. Although DNA is constituted by strings of genes, for example, there also exists an identity relation between DNA and strings of genes, in accordance with how DNA is defined. On the other hand, while anything that is not a primary (or substantial) kind must be a kind of something, ‘person’ is a primary kind. Baker explains this using the example of a statue, though one should be aware that whether statues count as primary kinds is a matter of some controversy.⁷⁶ If this is to be denied, then the analogy may be of little use, though I allow that it may still to explain the notion of derivative and non-derivative properties, as underpins Baker’s particular brand of personalism.

On this view, properties can be ‘transferred’ between the constituted being and the constituting being in this sense that they are said to belong derivatively or non-derivatively. Let us take a marble statue for instance. The marble statue only has the property of being *x* pounds in weight because the marble it is constituted by

⁷⁶ Neither Aristotle nor Aquinas allows that statues could be primary kinds, for they are not natural beings.

has this property, and would still have this property even if it had not been made into a statue. Furthermore, the piece of marble only has the property of being eye-catching to the general public because the statue has that property regardless of what constitutes it. We might say, then, that the marble statue has the property of being x pounds in weight derivatively, and that of being eye-catching to the general public non-derivatively, while the piece of marble has the property of being eye-catching to the general public derivatively, and that of being x pounds in weight non-derivatively. To be a statue, therefore, there is no requirement for the piece of marble to be the constituting being, as long as something is.

However, to be a material object, the statue must have a decomposition into parts all of which are material. It may be that the statue is composed of marble, which is a material substance, but itself has no properties non-derivatively that would contribute to its existence as a material object. This is, I suggest, puzzling, and seems to leave us with something that looks like a type of hylomorphism, where the statue is the immaterial form, having only *derivatively* physical properties, and the marble is the matter, which alone has physical properties *non-derivatively*. This is quite a different kind of hylomorphism from Aquinas' and Aristotle's, given that 'statue' is not a primary kind, and 'statue-ness' can only be an accidental form without denying the unicity of substantial form, but were one to view a statue as a single substance, 'statue-ness' would be its substantial form. While I very much doubt that Baker would want to hold a view of this kind as a materialist, it should be noted that her talk of borrowing properties is not so different from how one might speak of form and matter in the composite, and this is not compatible with a purely materialist ontology.

Let us apply this thinking to the case in question and see if this issue is just *prima facie* one or something more detrimental to the theory. Baker writes: "Person is your primary kind. Human animal is your body's primary kind. You are a person nonderivatively and a human animal derivatively; and your body is a human animal nonderivatively and a person derivatively" (p. 374)⁷⁷. Given what was argued previously, regarding the assumed interchangeability between the terms 'human animal' and 'human body', it seems that Baker will now be happy to say that we are constituted by a human animal. She should want to say, therefore, that the piece of marble is something like the human animal, and the person something like the statue. But does this not leave us in the same boat as earlier with regard to materialism, in the sense that even human persons are not necessarily wholly material beings? The property of being the subject of experience is, for Baker, what it means to be a person, but such a property could apply just as readily to natural beings, such as human beings, as to spiritual beings, such as angels. There is nothing in the property of personhood, therefore, that requires a being to be material, and so it seems that human persons are only material because of their non-essential constitution by organic bodies. Baker's ontology allows that human persons can cease to be animals. If, for example, one were able to change all my organic parts to mechanical ones without affecting my personhood, I would cease to be an animal, while remaining a person. We might then ask what exactly a human person is fundamentally.

⁷⁷ *ibid*

We shall turn to Baker's discussion of what she calls ontological significance to answer this. To say that a property has ontological significance is to say that the loss or gain of that property equates to substantial change. To put it another way, there is a coming-to-be of a new thing. Alternatively, this can be considered in terms of a substance's persistence conditions. If the loss of a property affects the persistence of a particular being, that property has ontological significance; it is, therefore, essential. Likewise, if persons are said to be permanence sortals, in Baker's terminology, they themselves are ontological significant. Ontological significance therefore can be applied to both properties and kinds. Baker formulates this for properties as follows:

The property of being an F has ontological significance if and only if, necessarily, if x is an F (nonderivatively), then being an F determines x's persistence conditions. (2002, p. 379)⁷⁸

Or rather, property *F* has ontological significance if and only if, if *x* has *F*, then *F* is essential to *x*. Put simply, personhood is an essential property for human persons, such that they cannot persist *per se* as anything but persons. Furthermore, animality is essential to the animal that constitutes the person, but not the person constituted by the animal. On this view, then, human persons could cease to be animals and still persist, but human bodies could not. Similarly, human animals could cease to be persons and still persist, but human persons could not. Therefore, we are animals, but only in the sense that 'are' means 'are constituted by', and not essentially.

For this reason, then, the argument for ontological significance applies not only to properties but to those having the properties. Baker writes: "persons have ontological significance in virtue of being persons, even when they are constituted by human animals; human animals have ontological significance in virtue of being human animals, even when they constitute persons" (p. 380)⁷⁹. This is to say that, whether in a constitution relation or not, personhood is always an essential property of persons, and animality always an essential property of animals. This is the position, so let us turn now to the implications of the view.

It must be true, as a consequence of what has been said, that for Baker, persons do not have ontological significance in virtue of being human animals, and neither do human animals in virtue of being persons. Or rather, being a human animal is not sufficient for sharing a decomposition with a person, and being a person is not sufficient for sharing a decomposition with a human animal. Such an idea leaves it open for persons to continue to exist as constituted by something other than human animals, by coming to possess a non-organic body, for example. Furthermore, human animals could exist without being (non-identity-expressing sense) persons, as Baker would argue is the case before the foetus gains what she refers to as first-person perspective, and then again potentially at the end of life, if sufficient brain damage is sustained such that the

⁷⁸ *ibid*

⁷⁹ *ibid*

human being loses certain of his or her mental capacities, assuming that such a loss can be sustained without death.

The implication of this view of the persistence conditions of human persons is that Baker's account of the coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be of human persons is not so different from the one Aquinas' presents, as discussed previously. For both, there is something existing in the womb that is not a human person, from conception to the point when rational activity, and therefore first-person perspective, begins. Furthermore, a being of a primary kind existing at an earlier time that is not a human person, cannot be numerically identical to a being existing at a later time that is a human person, for the coming-to-be of the human person brings about substantial change. Neither Baker nor Aquinas wants to say that you were ever that pre-rational embryo/foetus. Instead, you came into existence as a thinking being when you first existed. Unlike Aquinas, though, Baker allows that a human animal existing at an earlier time that is not even derivatively a human person can be identical to a human animal existing at a later time that is derivatively a person. This is possible on the basis that human animality and human personhood are incompatible properties, as Aquinas denies.

On the other hand, both Baker and Aquinas grant the possibility of a living being that is not a human person, following the death of a human person. For Aquinas, the human animal, and therefore person, could go out of existence leaving behind a non-human animal. On the constitution view, the human person's existence depends only on first-person perspective, so he or she could cease to be while the human animal he or she was previously constituted by continues with the very same biological life. There is a difference between the two theories as to why this is the case, but the result is the same. While Aquinas does not allow for the existence of human animals without those properties attributed to human persons, and Baker does, provided biological processes continue, neither allows for the initial or continued existence of a human person without the necessary mental life. Although I find it hard to believe that Baker, as a materialist, would appreciate this comparison to a philosopher who argues for the existence of incorporeal souls, there is no logical problem with the above conclusions. Nonetheless, as we saw in the previous chapter, there may be issues with the theory itself. As Olson points out, it is highly counterintuitive that each of us did not exist before we acquired first-person perspective. Perhaps worse though, Baker's account also allows that I now partake in a biological life that preceded my existence.

Furthermore, there is now a risk of logical inconsistency. Under Baker's person ontology, a living human being seems to be not one being but two: a person and an animal. Baker explicitly says that a human animal is a primary kind, and with regard to foetal development, that each human animal used to exist as a separate being, in no relation, constitutional or otherwise, to any other being, and could exist in that state once again. As such, even once the person comes into existence, the human animal itself remains an individual substance, with its own persistence criteria. As a consequence, not only has Baker divorced the apparently

neutral term ‘human being’ from ‘person’, in the sense that what I call ‘me’ is the latter and cannot be the former, but also, and more seriously, denied that human beings [by which I mean ‘us’] are single substances.

II. Shoemaker’s Constitution View: Coincident Beings

Like Baker, Shoemaker’s particular brand of personalism incorporates the idea that human persons are not identical to their bodies, but are instead constituted by their bodies. He, therefore, accepts the loose sense of ‘is’ in the statement: a human person is an animal. However, he directly denies Baker’s belief that constituting or being constituted by something possessing a particular property implies actually having it, that is, having a property derivatively, is not sufficient for actually having that property (Shoemaker, 2008, p. 323). In the case of persons, neither physical properties nor biological properties actually belong to persons, for they are only had non-derivatively of bodies. For Shoemaker, the only sense in which persons are animals is that persons are constituted by/share a decomposition with some animal. Nonetheless, Shoemaker acknowledges that the relation between persons and human animals is such that there may appear to be a too-many-minds problem; it seems to be true that both the animal that constitutes me, and I myself are thinking beings. This comes about as a consequence of the fact that I and my body share my body’s physical properties. Shoemaker writes:

[...] right now I and my biological animal share the same physical properties. And if sharing the same physical properties entails sharing the same mental properties, we get the undesired result that my body shares my mental properties. (p. 319)⁸⁰

It seems that this is difficult to refute, but because coincident entities, such as my body and me, will have different persistence conditions, it is to be expected that they will not share all the same physical properties, which, he argues, must be the case to avoid the too-many-minds problem. Moreover, for Shoemaker, a mental property can only be a property of an individual if that individual has the right sort of persistence conditions to have that property. So, I and the animal with which I share a body and decomposition are discernible with respect to mental properties, inasmuch as I, but not the animal, have the right sort of persistence conditions to have mental properties.

Let us consider his argument. Firstly, he introduces the notion of thick and thin properties, which differ according to the causal role they play. Thick properties are said to have in their nature an internal relation, such that they generate certain states, which in turn are tied to certain persistence conditions. Thin properties, on the other hand, can apply to things with different persistence conditions, for example both persons and human animals. Given these definitions, one would regard mental states as thick properties, in accordance with the causal role they play in the persistence of a person. Properties such as mass, shape etc., on the other hand, apply equally to coincident beings with different persistence conditions, and so do not play a role that differentiates the persistence conditions of, say, the person from the animal; these are thin properties.

⁸⁰ ibid

As a consequence of this, thick properties cannot supervene or bear any such relation to thin properties (p. 319). It must also be assumed that a person's mental properties are not realised in the person's thin physical properties, given that they belong to both person and animal. Instead, there must be physical properties that are themselves thick properties, in order for the supervenience thesis to hold. We do not, though, know exactly where our mental states are realised. Shoemaker, therefore, supposes that this is the role of the cerebrum, which realises certain mental states by itself being in a certain state, X (p. 320)⁸¹. This account, then, is seen as a way to both avoid the too-many-minds problem, and to explain how it is that a person has mental states, on account of which he has persistence. On the view that the cerebrum in a particular state is the physical realiser of a particular mental state, the cerebrum is said to be the carrier of the person's psychological continuity over time. As such, "for a person to have a cerebrum in state X is for there to be a cerebrum in state X that plays that role for that person" (ibid). At first, this argument looks to be circular, defining one in terms of the other and vice versa, but it is also questionable whether this actually solves the problem. A particular mental state is realised by the cerebrum in a particular physical state, such that both the mental state and the particular state of the cerebrum are thick properties. But what happens to the chain of causation? Persistence involves mental properties, and mental properties involve different states pertaining to the cerebrum. What, then, causes the cerebrum to be in this particular state? Shoemaker's thesis is open to the continuation of this chain, but he is not able to account for the cerebrum being in a particular state, except by some thick property, without the too-many-minds problem reappearing, and then the initial cause is still unknown. There is an infinite regression of what causes what to be in the state that it is.

However, he has already put pressure on his firmly held belief that person's have psychological persistence conditions. It is certainly true that 'cerebrum being in state X' is a physical property, but if each of the person's mental states is realised by different states of the cerebrum, which is therefore required for them to exist, then the persistence conditions of persons ultimately depend on physical and not psychological properties. Shoemaker allows that the cerebrum alone may be enough to bring about psychological continuity, but even if properties relating to the cerebrum are not shared by the body, on account of their thick nature, it is not true that the cerebrum itself belongs solely to the person. Surely, on this view, it is still necessary that something physical be part of the persistence of a person, even if it does not have to be anything in particular. Or, to put it another way, the persistence of a person consists ultimately in more than psychological properties, namely, the state of the cerebrum. It must be questioned, therefore, whether this is really neo-Lockeanism. One who subscribes to the existence of an immaterial mind could hold instead that the state of the cerebrum merely correlates with, and does not cause, the psychological properties of the person, but this is not open to the materialist, for whom the person is still a wholly material being, given that "all property instantiations are ultimately realized in microphysical states of affairs" (p. 321)⁸².

⁸¹ ibid

⁸² ibid

On the other hand, despite it being unclear how to answer some of these questions, it seems that Shoemaker's account is more successful than Baker's in making the case for persons and animals as coincident beings with different persistence conditions. While Baker allows that animals have first-person perspective derivatively, Shoemaker does not think that animals have first-person perspective at all. Mental properties, such as first-person perspective, are not shared by the animal with which we share a decomposition, for they are thick properties. This both avoids the too-many-minds problem, for presumably animals do not have minds either, and the worries from Olson about knowing that we are persons, given that the animal we share a decomposition with does not share this knowledge. Animals do not have minds and cannot therefore 'think' that they are persons. With regard to physical properties, however, these are shared by the person and the animal in the same way. The exception seems to be biological properties, which are shared by the person and the animal, but are satisfied in a different way by the person from the animal.

In the case of persons, Shoemaker provides a good case for how different types of properties may be applied to us and the animals with which we share a decomposition, within a personalist framework, but in the case of animals, it may be argued that Baker has been more charitable. For Baker, the notion of derivatively had properties enables her to say – despite resulting in a too-many-minds problem – that both the person and the animal have mental properties. For Shoemaker, on the other hand, it is not enough to actually have mental properties to have them derivatively, and so animals cannot have mental properties. We might allow this in the case of human animals, while coincident with persons, but what about non-human animals? In the first instance, it is more than controversial that animals in general do not have mental states. In the second, Shoemaker cannot even make the case for this without denying that animals in general have cerebrums with the potential to be in a particular state, as would correspond (and perhaps cause) certain mental states. While it may be true that persons have additional mental states, unique to human beings, it is very doubtful that non-human animals have no mental states, and even more so that they are not the result of brain states, as in human beings. But to avoid this, one must allow some mental properties to be thin properties, and this risks the too-many-minds problem once again.

III. Parfit's Parts Theory: Anti-Animalism or Essential Non-Animality

Perhaps the issue, then, is with the idea that personalism can be compatible with any kind of non-essential animalism, due to the difficulty of reconciling psychological properties with physical properties. Derek Parfit offers another solution. Persons and animals are separate beings, such that persons are essentially persons, according to this definition: a self-conscious being, aware of its identity and continued existence over time (Parfit, 1984, p. 77). Although this definition is very similar to Locke's, Parfit does not agree with the Lockean conception of human animals as persons, where the resulting conclusion is that there are two things that count as persons: a human animal, and a person. He does, however, consider himself a Lockean.

In his paper "We are not Human Beings", Parfit addresses animalist objections to personalism, and defends a thesis that regards persons as the thinking parts of human beings/animals. The reader should note that Parfit's

use of the term ‘human being’ differs from the one we have been using. It refers solely to human animals and is therefore not neutral with regards to animality or materialism. To save confusion, I will use ‘human animal’ when he would use ‘human being’. This form of personalism is known as the Embodied Part View, though Parfit defends a particular strand of it: the Embodied Person View. He defines it as follows: “human animals think by having a conscious thinking part which is a person in the Lockean sense” (2012, p. 17). To turn this around and thereby answer the main question of our discussion, therefore, we can say that persons are defined by Parfit as conscious thinking parts of human animals. While persons can (theoretically) exist apart from human animals, human animals need not have a person-part to persist. Persons and human animals are therefore separable.

Returning to the foetus problem from the previous chapter, then, the human animal develops as a foetus up to a point of sufficient physical brain development for the required psychological properties associated with persons to be realised. At this stage, there comes into being a person, though it is not actually a separate substance, but a part of the existing substance. This view seems to overcome the problems Olson highlighted with regards to what happens to the human animal when it becomes able to think⁸³, the most significant of which is the too-many-minds problem. Parfit can respond to this by stating that the human animal does not directly think; only the person does. He distinguishes the two. (A) Inner-I is the person, while (B) outer-I is the human animal. For example, we might utter the statement, ‘I am wet’. This would be true directly of the outer-I – that is, the human animal I am a part of – while only indirectly true of the inner-I, though we apply it to ourselves. Conversely, ‘I am thinking’ is said by me, as pertaining to the inner-I directly, and the outer-I indirectly. He restates this as follows:

*(C) Inner-I is the person that directly thinks these thoughts, and Outer-I is the animal that indirectly thinks them. (p. 22)*⁸⁴

Here, (C) follows from (A) and (B). Clearly, then, this avoids the too-many-minds problem, but it seems to present some other potential issues. As with Shoemaker, one must ask, if it is the case that person is the thinking part of the human animal, how we account for the minds of non-human animals. Parfit seems to want to say that no person is the part of a non-human animal, but if non-human animals are to be afforded the capacity for thought, we would have to equate, say, the cerebral cortex with the thinking part of the non-human animal. As a result, it would be part of the animal’s brain that thinks and not the animal itself. This avoids both Baker’s problem of too-many-minds and Shoemaker’s concerning how animals in general can have mental properties, but it seems to risk suggesting that non-human animals can be persons too, and draws away from ‘person’ the notion of being a thinking being. As Olson states in his reply, it seems that Parfit has eliminated some of the metaphysical problems, but created others (2015, p. 39). The notion of

⁸³ At least on Olson’s view, ‘think’ refers to more than just a basic capacity for thought. Instead, this is a property reserved to persons, perhaps comparable with ‘reason’ and ‘introspect’.

⁸⁴ *ibid*

inner-I and outer-I is not especially intuitive, and it does not cover up the fact that though the animal is indirectly thinking, it is not actually thinking.

Nonetheless, considering certain properties to belong to a kind of inner-I, and others to an outer-I is not the only way to distinguish between mental and physical properties. We find such an account in P F Strawson, who does not consider it necessary that persons have bodies, and yet does require them to essentially have bodily attributes. He defines a person as follows:

[...] a type of entity such that both predicates ascribing states of consciousness and predicates ascribing corporeal characteristics, a physical situation, etc. are equally applicable to a single individual of that single type. (1959, p. 102)

These states of consciousness, specifically one's thoughts and sensations, which parallel with the neo-Lockean's psychological properties, are ascribed to oneself. So too are properties of height, colour, position and so forth, which should be ascribed to something, and when ascribed to ourselves, they are ascribed to whatever is 'I'. Both types of properties, therefore, are ascribed to oneself. We say that 'I am too warm' and 'I am sitting in bed', as well as 'I am in pain', but we do not say 'my body is too warm' or 'my body is sitting in bed'. Furthermore, it is even possible to say 'my body is too warm' and not mean 'I am too warm' - as would be the case in a fever, though what is really meant is 'I know I feel too warm, but I am really cold'; the property of 'feeling' (active verb) is also attributed to me, not my body. At this point, my body almost seems to be something detached from me. On Strawson's person theory, we cannot say that a person *has* a body and mean any more than a person has 'bodily attributes'. It is perhaps for this reason that Parfit does not draw parallels between the outer-I and the human body, though he may still share Strawson's definition without subscribing to his conclusions.

The key difference between Strawson and Parfit, though, is with regards to the human body. While Strawson differentiates between states of consciousness and bodily attributes, both pertaining to persons, Parfit only allows the former to be attributed (at least directly) to persons. Furthermore, Parfit's person is a part of a human animal, while for Strawson the term 'person' is itself a primitive concept, irreducible, as a type of entity. We might then wonder why Parfit divides psychological properties and bodily properties between the person and the animal, and not the person and the body. Unlike Baker, he is careful not to equate the human animal with the human animal's body, though the difference between the types of properties directly attributed to each may well cause us to question why.

The answer, I believe, comes down to what I take to be a more materialist conception of human personhood. For Parfit, it is not inconceivable that I could continue to exist as a separated cerebrum, say, in a vat, provided my psychological properties were unchanged. In this case, I would no longer be part of a human animal. I cannot, though, cease to be a part of a human body. The cerebrum is part of the brain, which in turn

is part of the body. The human animal, on the other hand, encompasses the whole of the physical body, which includes the part we call the person.

So, specifically what part of the animal is the person? Such is a question that Olson attempts to answer in his response to Parfit, given that Parfit himself does not actually do more than indicate that he takes the person to be a part of the brain. Olson calls this view thinking-subject minimalism, which states that “a true thinker has to be made up of all and only the objects directly involved in its thinking” (ibid, p. 48). Amongst those discussed by Olson, there seem to be two issues with this theory. Firstly, we once again have the problem of the thinking animal. If thinking parts are persons, and persons cannot be parts of non-human animals, how can an animal be said to have thoughts? Once more, Parfit could argue that ‘think’ should be not taken in the usual way, such that persons are the self-conscious thinking parts of animals, while the normal animal thinking parts are found in the rest of the brain, but this would not meet the criteria for being composed of “all and only the objects directly involved in its thinking”. Instead, it would leave it open for persons to be separable from normal animal thoughts.⁸⁵ The alternative might be to allow that all animals think on account of the thinking part of their brains. But how do we then block the move that animals seem to be persons too? As Olson states, it is hard to decide which parts of an organism are directly involved in thinking, and this may be true for other activities too.

As a result of his conclusions, it seems that Parfit’s view is at odds with the narrow person criterion, to which he subscribes. This is the account of personal persistence according to psychological criteria realised by physical attributes. However, Parfit considers each of us to be a Lockean person. While Locke’s person persists only through the same consciousness, and on account of an immaterial soul, Parfit’s owes its persistence to the thinking part of the brain, with which the person shares a decomposition. Something, therefore, must be sacrificed. As Olson suggests, he must either reject the narrow person criterion, equating us to our brains directly, or embrace immaterialism of persons. Another alternative would be to accept that persons are human beings, in the biological sense. Nonetheless, the first and third options would then open him to all the problems discussed in the last chapter concerning contemporary animalism. Furthermore, it seems that Parfit does not have to be committed to a materialist account of personhood in order to see persistence as a matter of psychological continuity, although this may leave him open to the problems he highlights himself with Cartesian dualism. I also suspect that he would not be able to accept an account of personhood that completely separates the person from the material body. Such a view would make it very difficult to decide when foetuses come to have person-parts, and to allow a person to cease to exist without any change to the physical body at all.

It seems, therefore, that the appropriate account of personhood will allow persons to be understood as Lockean persons, but without leaving it as an implausibility that persons are also necessarily bodily, though

⁸⁵ It may be up for debate what these are, but it is likely that they will include automatic thoughts prompted by sensory stimulus e.g. ‘that hurts’, and simple decision-making, as accounted for by instinct.

not merely reducible to the brain. Such would be the account of one sharing the interests of both Parfit and Olson, for example. Before we look into the possibility of reconciling personalism with animalism though, it is necessary to consider the ontology of persons in the light of the personal identity question. For, as Parfit says, it is the latter that can help us answer the former (1984, p. 77).

iv. Persistence as Persons, Animals and Human Beings

According to personalism, as we have defined it, human persons have ontological significance, that is, they are permanently and essentially persons, as is held by Baker, Shoemaker and Parfit. Furthermore, whether compatible or not, human animality and human personhood do not name the same property, though there may be some overlapping. Given that the properties differ, and human persons are essentially persons, then, it cannot be the case that human animals, which are not essentially persons, have the persistence conditions of human persons. As such, there is no need for each of us to remain an animal/constituted by an animal in order to continue to exist. Such is the view of the neo-Lockean, according to which human beings only have persistence as human persons.

Baker, however, defines a human person as “a person constituted by a human animal (or body)” (p. 371)⁸⁶. Furthermore, in accordance with neo-Lockeanism, it must be a least metaphysically possible for a person to be constituted by something other than a human animal. Baker says herself that there is no issue with the idea that all the biological parts could be gradually replaced by mechanical ones, such that nothing changes about her essential nature, and yet she ceases to be an organism. Shoemaker and Parfit both seem to be open to similar possibilities according to their persistence criteria as essentially persons. It is to be assumed, therefore, that according to neo-Lockeanism, having a human body is only an accidental property of being a human person. Additionally, we are left with the conclusion that the thing that makes human persons human is the possession of a human body. Baker states this outright – *human* specifies only what kind of animal constitutes each of us – but this has some puzzling and perhaps even uncomfortable implications.

Firstly, it takes Parfit’s statement that we are not human beings (by which he means human animals), in accordance with his 2011 paper, to its extreme conclusion. Given that human persons and human animals have different persistence criteria, on account of either a constitution or parts theory of personhood, it cannot be true that we, as human persons, are identical to human animals. This is accepted by all such personalists. However, if our humanity is accounted for solely by our being constituted etc. by human animals, it is to be concluded that we are not essentially ‘human’ beings in any sense. The terms ‘person’ (as applying to us, call them us-persons⁸⁷) and ‘human being’ now have different intensions. The former applies to beings with first-person perspective according to psychological continuity and connectedness. The latter, on the other hand, is assigned to those beings who meet the above conditions of personhood, given that we are persons essentially, as well as whatever is needed for humanity. Baker states the requirement of being constituted by a human

⁸⁶ Baker, Lynne (2002)

⁸⁷ I use ‘us-persons’ here to refer to human persons, but without committing oneself to an essential account of humanity.

animal, but it seems most of us would allow some of our body to become mechanical while still maintaining a human persistence. The question is how much. I do not claim to be able to give a satisfactory solution to this problem, but it is for this reason that the implications of human beings only being contingently human is deeply weird, though apparently a necessary consequence of neo-Lockeanism.

Furthermore, if we are not essentially human beings, we are not essentially human persons either. At best, we are a certain sort of person. Nonetheless, if we are in no way indistinguishable from other persons essentially by our humanity, it is hard to see how we differ from these persons at all. Angels, for example, are generally thought of as persons. They meet the usual person criteria, but they are not differentiated in their personhood on account of any constitution or part relation, for they have no bodies and no animal parts. Likewise, if robot-persons are possible, how are they essentially different from us-persons? These three types of person are clearly quite different, having unique mental properties and capacities, but it is now difficult for us to say in what ways their persistence conditions differ, though for Locke they are the same. One might argue that if robot-persons actually come to exist, it would be unnecessary to distinguish them from originally biological persons, even awarding them the same rights, but even if this were the case, it could not explain how and why us-persons are essentially different from angel-persons. If we were to go down this route, therefore, we would have to consider our persistence conditions in the light of our contingent humanity. It cannot be enough that we are beings with first-person perspective and fancy psychological properties; something else must distinguish us from any other possible persons. But on the neo-Lockean view, there is no room for such a distinction, and we have to accept that human persons do not represent a particular kind.

Another reason that we should not want to accept a view of human persons as non-essentially human is that it leaves us with a puzzle as to the persistence conditions of human animals, especially pre-personhood. Human persons come into existence when the human animal reaches the necessary stage of foetal development. There is then a constitution (or part-hood) relation between the person and the animal, but because personhood is a permanent and essential property of persons, it must be true that a new being has come into existence. However, the person now in some kind of relationship with the human animal is only called 'human' because of the type of being it is now constituted by/a part of, and therefore, 'human animal' is not a primary kind. But this cannot be. Before the person came into existence there was a being called a human animal existing in the womb. Furthermore, if something were to happen to the person, destroying it but leaving behind a living human body, there would still be a human animal in existence. Clearly, then, that human animal is a primary kind with its own persistence conditions (as Baker states herself). It can outlive the person, and so does not require its existence to persist. The animal, then, may come to be constituted by a person, or have a person as a part, but it is still a being numerically different from the person. Aside from the problem we discussed earlier, concerning how a living human being can no longer be thought of as just one substance, this now raises the question as to whether the person can really ever be called 'human', and mean more than 'belonging to something that is a human being', as with a human hand, heart, brain etc., given that it is possible to separate the person from the human animal without destroying the person.

For the neo-Lockean, then, it is possible for a (previously human) person to be dehumanised, but as I have attempted to demonstrate, this does lead to some unfortunate conclusions, the most damning of which is surely that human persons are not ontologically significant, that is, 'human person' does not represent a primary kind. We are not essentially *human* persons, but only persons who currently have human bodies. This is not actually something that Baker argues for – quite the opposite in fact – but here she has contradicted herself. If personhood is permanently and essentially a property of persons, and human persons are just persons constituted by human bodies/animals, which are non-essential, then human personhood cannot be permanently and essentially a property of human persons. As Baker states, 'human' just marks the person out as having a human body, nothing more. Therefore, if human bodies/animals can be separated from persons, human persons are not essentially human persons. It is worth noting though, that despite Baker trying to argue for both, constitutionalism is open to the idea that human personhood is not permanently and essentially a property of human persons. The question is whether this view can be supported.

So, what is the relation between the persistence of human persons and the persistence of human animals for the neo-Lockean? For both constitutionalists and part-theorists, there is a one-way relation between the two, such that being a human person implies sharing a decomposition with a human animal, but being a human animal is not sufficient for being coincident with a human person. Additionally, although human persons and human animals must have different persistence criteria, on the grounds that they came into existence at different times, there is also a necessary link between them. Us-persons can survive complete separation from a human animal, but human persons cannot; human persons are essentially human. Furthermore, although our *human* personhood may not be essential to us-persons, personhood is. This, then, is the opposite of animalism, which typically denies that human persons (and therefore us-persons) are essentially persons on the assumption that we cannot be both essentially human animals and (human) persons.

The truth, therefore, of personalism hangs on the truth of the premise 'personhood is permanently and essentially a property of persons'. If personhood is not essential to us, and we are persons, which I take to be true, then we are not essentially persons. If we are not essentially persons, then the essence of our being is our human animality, or something else altogether. And yet to be human animals is only to be a little higher than the great apes. For Olson, this is enough for us not to be merely animals, but the worry here is that what we have that makes us different from the other animals is not a property of our humanity but our personhood, which is not essential to us. For the Aristotelian, we are rational animals, but if rationality is essential to us, we cannot exist prior to it, and yet the early-term foetus, whose brain is not sufficiently developed for rational thought, lacks this property, despite it being an animal. It seems that (contra Aquinas), one would have to choose between the idea that we are animals, and the idea that we are essentially self-conscious and truly rational. For the personalist, then, we did not come into existence prior to the animal we come to share a decomposition with having the physical capacity to support self-consciousness, which as with personhood, is permanently and essentially a property of persons.

Baker, for example, makes the case for this by considering the differences between human beings and the rest of the animal kingdom, according to the principle that what we fundamentally are is that which makes us different from them, and not those properties we have in common. It may be that our essence contains some of these latter properties, but that cannot be sufficient, for then we would simply be an ape etc. and nothing more. The idea, then, is that we are fundamentally self-conscious, which distinguishes us from all other animals, and yet biologically-speaking, we are not significantly different from higher apes. From this, one should conclude that it is not our biology that reveals our true nature, and so there is more to us than that which is encompassed by 'human animal'. If this is true, it can only be assumed that self-consciousness is an essential property, and therefore persons (or whatever things we are in addition to biological animals) are members of a primary kind. In the case of the PVS patient, then, the personalist denies both that there exists a person, and that the PVS patient is identical to one of us. Although Olson's intuitions are strongly in favour of the view that I can be numerically identical to a being with no awareness that she is me, such an idea would be inconceivable to the personalist, and this is not obviously false.

Another real-life situation where neo-Lockeanism in general seems to give the most intuitive account of the facts concerns twin cases, though it is unlikely that either account will be wholly sufficient. In the first case, the zygote divides before implantation, but not fully, and the result is dicephalic or conjoined twins. In rare but often famous cases, these twins are connected from the neck down, sharing a body and sometimes also a heart and other vital organs, preventing them from being separated without causing one or both to die. Clearly, then, they are two persons, with their own individual thoughts, beliefs and preferences. Yet for an animalist, animals are typically identified by their bodies, and in this case, there is only one. What then shall we say? No one body has two brains, so how can there be only one animal? Olson, however, does not consider it a problem that an animal could be pared down to just a living brain, such that there would still remain the original animal, albeit in a very mutilated form. In this case, then, it would seem that there are two heavily overlapping mutilated animals. It is questionable whether this reasoning is satisfactory for the above case, for the second brain, as it were, is still connected to the rest of the other animal, as would not be the case in the paring down of an animal to a living brain. Furthermore, there is actually more of the second animal than just its brain. It has a complete head and uses the shared lungs and organs. What we actually have, then, are two overlapping complete animals.

But how many persons do we have? An animalist who allows brains to be animals has to accept that there are two persons in this case. However, if it turns out that there is no justification for saying that a single living brain is an animal, it seems that there are two overlapping animals and two non-overlapping persons. Persons, though, are not substance-sortals for the animalist, so if there really are two non-overlapping persons, it is hard to see how there could be two overlapping animals. Alternatively, the animalist could deny the existence of two persons. As he cannot deny that there are two distinct personalities, he would then have to argue for one animal having two mental lives instead, perhaps as an extreme version of what can happen

in cases of corpus callosotomy for the treatment of epilepsy, where the two hemispheres are disconnected from each other. It is possible for these 'split-brain' patients to experience the world as though with two brains or at least two minds, but not to the extent required for the animalist denying the existence of two whole persons. Although not an argument in itself, it is worth noting that neither common sense, nor the medical profession accepts the possibility of one human being with two mental lives in the dicephalic twin case. It is accepted that there has been an incomplete division of the zygote, and that neither resulting person has any more or less right to life than the other. As such, they must remain two persons with one body, legally treated as separate.

However, it is up for debate whether the neo-Lockean can give a more satisfactory answer. Baker and Shoemaker, for example, would want to say that there are two persons, and as human beings are persons constituted by human animals, there are also two human beings. So far, this seems reasonable, but what happens in the case of brain damage to either one individual? For the neo-Lockean, the loss of personhood is the ceasing to exist of a particular being. If one of the twins ends up in a PVS, therefore, she ceases to exist, while her twin is unaffected. Now, therefore, there is one person – one human being – and two human animals, assuming the second twin's body is in fully working order, possibly even still moving around, digesting food etc. But how could there be only one human being? The neo-Lockean might say each person was constituted by parts of one whole dicephalic animal, instead of letting there be two animals, but it is unclear how the loss of a person could result in the loss of a human being without the loss of an animal. The animalist though could still say there were two persons here, given two brains.

But this second case is more troubling. This time, the separation of the zygote was almost complete, but the babies' heads ended up fused together at the top of the skull. Furthermore, in a rare case with only one known survivor, the second baby never developed a body, and as such was parasitic on the body of the other. Despite only sharing in her sister's body though, the second baby's head had a fully working brain, and she was able to blink, smile and cry independent of her twin. Clearly, then, in this case there are still two persons, but it is up for debate how many living organisms there are. Is a head enough to be a human organism? Once again, the animalist could say we have one person with two mental lives, but this seems no more satisfactory than it did in the other case. There is, however, a significant difference between the cases. In the first, although the twins shared a body, considered separately, they both had what was needed to survive. In the second, however, only the first twin was really viable, that is able to survive as an independent organism. The second had life only through its twin. For this reason, it was decided in the interests of the first child, to separate them, risking both their lives, but definitely killing the second.

This now raises a very interesting question, especially for the personalist. What is it that gives persons their particular dignity and right to life in virtue of being persons? The above example suggests that it is not enough for one to have an individual mental life. He must also have some sort of biological viability. It is often said, most notably by Kripke, that one should not let the hard cases decide the issues, but I do not think

we do ourselves justice if we fail to take into account those situations about which society and the law have to make decisions. These cases may be pretty rare, but they do happen, and someone has to decide when separating one twin from another impinges on a person's rights and when it does not. On what basis does one make these decisions if we do consider them? This then is a question of real significance to the personalist who sees the person as entirely separate from his or her body.

Furthermore, given that no body is essential to a person under this view, nothing that is essential to a person can be understood in terms of biology, for my having this particular body/being constituted by this particular animal is not essential for my persistence. What, then, explains why I am the person that I am? Science appeals to the biology of my brain and my unique DNA to explain this, but the personalist cannot. If these things are not essential to me, they cannot account for the person I essentially am. It seems that the personalist would be better placed relying on a kind of immaterial mind as an essential part of a person, but this still does not entirely avoid the necessity of the brain, which seems to have a role in our mental states, even if it does not cause them. How, then, can the person really be metaphysically separate from his or her body? All this assumes that at least certain aspects of one's personality are essential to him, but it is natural to say that someone is not the same person any more when they have a complete change of character, so perhaps there is some truth in this.

On the other hand, it seems that animalism cannot entirely account for the essential properties of each person either. Consider monozygotic twins, for example. At birth, the babies likely look identical, and although there will be subtle differences in their DNA, biologically-speaking, they are as close to being identical as it is possible to be. It is not uncommon, however, for their personalities to be at least as different as normal siblings, and sometimes even opposite. What, then accounts for this difference? Perhaps the animalist can appeal to the small differences in the structure of the brain, but it debatable whether this will be sufficient to explain why monozygotic twins can be so different psychologically but so similar physically. It seems that reference to purely biological factors cannot fully account for the individuality of each person, any more than purely psychologically factors can. Both are required to some extent. We shall look in the next section, therefore, at the case for psychological continuity, to see if this can better answer the relevant questions about self and personhood than what has been discussed already.

§3.2 Neo-Lockeanism and Personal Persistence

i. Persistence, Identity and Survival

This final section will consider the relationship between persistence, identity and survival according to neo-Lockeanism, and is divided into the following seven subsections. The first will set out some of the main questions each of us may have with regard to our own persistence. Following this, we shall assess a number of different accounts of persistence, starting with the apparently incomplete notions of psychological continuity or connectedness, and considering individually both qualitative and numerical identity, the latter

of which is often regarded as irrelevant to what really matters in survival. Having identified the gaps in these accounts, I will then discuss the matter of true survival, according to a theory I have called connected self-consciousness, and the ways in which it is related to numerical identity. On this basis, it will then be possible to return to the controversial foetus problem, and identify the best response. Finally, I shall highlight the main benefits and drawbacks of personalism, in order to motivate a compatibility thesis between the claims of personalism and animalism.

Questions concerning the relation between human animals and (human) persons tend to involve additional matters of the self. But what is the self, other than whatever is signified by 'I'? For some, the self is simply the soul/mind, perhaps the locus of all my thoughts, memories and beliefs; everything else is just my body, which belongs to me. To others, the self is the person, which may also at times designate a human animal – that which necessarily has a body, but not necessarily this one. If, however, the intension of 'self' is greater than, or something other than, the person as a purely psychological being, then any questions about what makes one the same self at one time as another will involve more than, or different from, a general theory of personal identity. In the absence of a replacement word for 'personal' though, I will simply take this to mean the identity of oneself simpliciter, without reference to the narrow criteria.

ii. *Psychological Continuity and Connectedness*

Persistence at the personal level for Neo-Lockeanism requires only the same continued consciousness. This is generally understood in terms of psychological continuity, whereby a person is said to persist wherever his memories, beliefs etc. are to be found, but others prefer to speak in terms of psychological *connectedness*, where it is only required that there be connections between psychological states before and after, without requiring identity, that is, without requiring that the persisting person be in any of the same psychological states at the later time that he is in at the earlier time. Either way, on this view, it is assumed that if a person's brain were transferred to another body for whatever reason, he would just wake up as the same person with a different body. Such a change is believed to have no effect on his personhood; he would remain a person, and he would remain the same person, at least numerically.

However, the moving of persons from one body to another via the brain leaves it at least metaphysically possible that the same person could end up in two different bodies at the same time, whereby a person's consciousness is somehow divided or duplicated, seeming to create two persons both claiming to be the same person. Identity, however, is a one-one relation, so two beings cannot possibly be numerically identical to one. We have the same issue with monozygotic twins, and as such, most people would say that that neither twin came into existence until implantation. Otherwise, we have to say that the initial zygote is numerically identical to both twins, which is logically impossible.

It seems, then, that the neo-Lockean has a choice. He can either reject the possibility of fission, such that no one person can in any way end up fully in more than one location at any particular time. Or he can allow

fission, but deny that numerical identity is necessary for survival. The former course is perhaps a difficult one for anyone with a psychological view of personal identity, given that the body plays no role in persistence, though not unpopular.

iii. *Qualitative Identity*

To discuss the problem of identity fully would take more time than is available to us, but there are a number of issues relating to the identity of persons and the link between identity and essential properties that ought to be highlighted.

Although qualitative identity is often seen as a prerequisite for numerical identity, neither animalism nor personalism requires x to have (at an earlier time) exactly the same properties y has (now), in order to be identical: x need not be exactly as y was, for x to be numerically identical to y . Instead, they both allow a person to lose either mind or organic body and still be numerically identical to the initial being. Nonetheless, it cannot be the case that the two beings are in no way qualitatively identical, for then not even the essential properties would remain, assuming that our qualitative properties are included in our essential properties. Baker, for example, imagines that she could lose her organic body and instead gain a mechanical one without ceasing to be, the assumption being that an organic body is not essential to her. That which she is, concerns only what is necessary for first-person perspective, and so only this partial qualitative identity is required.

However, we cannot call organic Baker and mechanical Baker qualitatively identical, for they do not have the same properties. Identical twins, for example, are so called because they look the same. Similarly, if my colleague also has a copy of *Summa Theologiae*, that is not mine, I could say that it is identical to mine. By this I do not mean it is the same book numerically, but simply that they have enough of the same qualitative properties.

But is this enough for persons? I suggest that it probably is not enough for the continuing existence of any being. Consider the following illustration. In the first case, I leave my copy of *Summa Theologiae* on my desk and return to find a copy of the book not on my desk, but on the printer. I turn to a colleague and ask if this is my copy. His response is that well, it is identical. I reply that I do not want to know if it is identical, but whether it is my copy. He may then wonder why this matters. To me, however, it is very important. My copy had been given to me by my grandmother just before she died, and it therefore had sentimental value. It turns out, though, that another colleague had accidentally spilled a mug of coffee over mine and given me his instead. The other book had all the same physical properties as my book, and yet is not actually the original. I have reason to be dissatisfied with the replacement.

iv. *Numerical Identity*

In terms of continuing existence (survival), therefore, numerical identity seems to have a vital role to play. There is no other way that we can know for sure that a sense of ownership is justified. Neither can we explain why I should be dissatisfied with the replacement book, though for Parfit, there is a difference between what we *do* care about and what we *should* care about. With persons, though, there is a further explanation for why identity does matter. This concerns the matter of self-consciousness. Bernard Williams (1970) demonstrates the puzzle. He compares two cases. In the first, two persons, *A* and *B*, are to enter a machine that will exchange enough of their minds such that *A* will expect to emerge again in *B*'s body and vice versa. Each then chooses what outcome - \$100,000 or torture – he wants to give to each emerging body. It is assumed that both will choose for the torture to happen to their current bodies, as they believe they will have each other's bodies.

This time, we are to imagine that we are the person to be tortured, following a number of brain operations carried out while fully conscious. Imagine then that you are told that you are going to be tortured, and then that you will first undergo some brain surgery that will leave you with amnesia up to this point. Given that the torture is still in the future, this would leave you no less fearful of it. Next, you are told that further surgery will give you the memories of someone else. Now it seems that you will undergo amnesia and madness before torture. Again, this will not change your fear of it. In addition to all this, you learn that another person will also lose his memories and be given some of yours instead. He will then be given a large sum of money. This will not cheer you up; if anything, you will feel jealous.

v. *True Survival*

So, what is going on here? Clearly there is something more in these parallel cases that causes the reaction in the first situation that *A* and *B* have swapped bodies, but in the second, that it is you at the end who will experience the torture, than that one involves persons you do not know, and the other you. This, I believe, is the difference between persistence *per se* and personal persistence. As it is, if scenario a) were possible, perhaps via powerful hypnosis, we really do have no reason to think that *A* will end up in *B*'s body and so on. Firstly, this is because a person is more than his memories, but more significantly, because both have a specific consciousness unique to them as persons. It is clearer in scenario b), however. This time, we can actually imagine suddenly finding we had lost all our memories, but this does not affect our awareness of being in the present. Likewise, it is not impossible that we could be hypnotised into believing that the events in someone else's life were in fact our own. Once again, this has no effect on our present awareness. Furthermore, the other person, who thinks he is you, because he has your memories, does not actually have the same awareness of being you as you do. That is to say, even if I "Gill" completely forgot who I was, and all the memories associated with my life, I will still have the awareness that I am me. There is a difference between knowing that I am me and knowing that I am "Gill". In the same way, the person with my memories would think she is "Gill", but she cannot think she is me. Only I can think that I am me.

What really matters in personal survival, then, is what we might call connected self-consciousness; I survive just in case I continue to have the awareness that I am still me. This cannot apply to non-human animals, given that they do not seem to have self-consciousness, and neither will it apply to me (if I exist) before I had a brain equipped for such awareness. This does not stop the foetus being me, however, given Unger's solution to the foetus problem, which we shall come back to shortly. Furthermore, there may be no issue with human persons still actually being human animals, if biological and psychological persistence conditions can be shown to overlap, as was discussed in the previous chapter. It seems, then, that I may undergo all kinds of memory edits and even personality changes, but if I fail to lose consciousness during this, I can still be sure that I am me. It becomes harder if my amnesia is the result of some accident that causes a loss of consciousness, but it is typical in these cases for the person to remember the incident, if nothing else, and then he will know that he is the same him who had the accident. Even so though, there is no reason for us to think that our consciousness could actually be transferred to another location without the rest of us (whatever that may be), and so we must survive only when we are aware that we are still us, which is to say we are numerically identical to ourselves.

vi. *The Foetus Problem Revisited*

What, then, are the criteria for the numerical identity of persons? This is the problem from the previous chapter reconsidered here in accordance with what we have just discussed. We recall the foetus/embryo problem, which occurs with personalism because there is a point at which the foetus comes to share a decomposition with a person. The main issue concerns what happens to the foetus/embryo that is not me, given that numerically identical beings cannot have different criteria for identity. It seems that the personalist has two choices. Either he can argue that the foetus goes out of existence to be replaced by the human person, at the point when personhood, according to certain occurrent mental properties, is first attained, or he can take the view that the person and the animal are two concurrent beings. Neither is a particularly attractive option. The former is open to the same criticism as Aquinas' embryogenesis account: it requires the disappearance of a being that seems to still be there, on the grounds that it has gained new properties. The latter is perhaps worse; there is not only one being – a human person – but two, namely, a human animal and a (human) person, both of which have some claim to being a person.

The animalist, who requires a human being to have certain features applicable only to individual living organisms, can side-step the foetus problem by embracing Olson's concept of 'human being dough', which argues that none of us can exist until implantation, at which point we are individual living organisms. As Norman Ford (1988) puts it, our lives do not begin until the moment that twins are no longer a possibility (as late as fifteen days). He defines a human being as "a living individual with the inherent active potential to develop towards human adulthood without ceasing to be the same ontological individual" (p. 85). It seems that this definition, and therefore criterion for identity, would carry us through from embryo to foetus to baby.

Nonetheless, this will not be enough for the personalist, given that persons are essentially persons, and persons are beings with first-person perspective. To be a human person, it is not sufficient to be a human. Neither is it sufficient to be a human person, to only have the potential to develop occurrent mental properties. Therefore, the personalist who wants to deny that persons are living organisms, or at least essentially living organisms, has a problem. If occurrent self-consciousness is required for the survival of persons, how can any being lacking self-consciousness be numerically identical to a person? For the personalist, it cannot. However, to believe that persons are essentially persons, does not require the further belief that one must actually have certain psychological properties. One could, therefore, still be a personalist and instead adopt an account of identity, whereby something is a person if and only if it has the potential to gain (or regain), or actually has, certain mental properties. On this basis, one's psychological and biological persistence conditions would be in some way interlinked, given that the development of the mind to gain such properties depends on the development of the brainstem. This is not likely to be popular with personalists, but without such a move, the foetus problem in some form still stands.

vii. *Personalism's Key Claims*

Despite all this, the notion of person as a sortal concept appears vastly more coherent than the alternative view. To suppose that persons are permanently and essentially persons is to start from a perspective of which we have the most knowledge – ourselves, including our understanding, thoughts and beliefs – when trying to interpret the world. On the other hand, to deny that human persons are in any way linked ontologically to human animals, results in serious problems about our continued identity over time, and perhaps more significantly, rejects the claims of science that we are members of the species *Homo sapiens* and share in the life of an organism. Personalism seems to regard it as necessary that being an animal, even a higher animal, would in some way diminish our status as beings with significant dignity in accordance with a self-conscious nature and capacity for rational thought. This is neither implied by animalism nor necessary. The mistake therefore is to assume that compatibility between personalism and animalism is not possible. I will challenge this thinking further in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: The Metaphysics of Human Nature

§4.1 – The Ontological Status of Human Persons and Animals

i. The Nature of Human Beings

The purpose of this final chapter is to put forward a holistic view of human beings ⁸⁸[by which I mean ‘us’] as necessarily both bodily and psychological, on the basis that the terms ‘human animal’ and ‘human person’ are permanence sortals. Or to put it another way, human beings are essentially both animals and persons. In this first section, I will briefly set out the main problems with theories of human nature that deny this account, typically on the grounds that either animality is a permanent and essential property of human beings, or personhood is, before discussing a view offered by Baker, against the possibility of animality and personhood both being permanent and essential properties of human beings, whereby it is believed that the terms ‘human animal’ and ‘human person’ cannot have the same intensions. The next two sections will then compare and contrast scholastic animalism with contemporary animalism and then contemporary personalism in order to reach an account of the metaphysics of human nature that best reflects the facts. The final section will present this theory, according to a developed, and in some cases, new interpretation of the Thomistic theories of embryogenesis and life after bodily death.

It seems, then, that no matter which option one chooses, with regards to the properties of human animality and human personhood, problems will arise that cannot be solved without sacrificing something of the claims, regarding the persistence conditions of human beings, human persons and human animals, to which we are most committed. Reason dictates that the foetus in the womb cannot just disappear as a whole and must instead ‘become’ a specific person, either in part or in whole. Furthermore, the foetus/embryo problem prevents one from claiming that this person is identical to that late term foetus without denying numerical identity between the late term foetus and the one just before the property of self-consciousness is acquired. The denial of numerical identity just is the foetus/embryo problem, and yet its acceptance prevents one from saying that personhood is a permanent and essential property of human beings. Alternatively, one could say that the foetus is numerically identical with the human animal, so the foetus is still with us (as an ex-foetus), sharing a body and a decomposition with the person, though not thinking, as is necessary to avoid the too-many-minds problem. As before though, this runs the risk of denying the property of thinking to animals in general, and there is no evidence that this is the sort of property that they could not have. These are just a few of the problems we will be discussing in this chapter.

⁸⁸ It is assumed that the term ‘human being’ should rightly and properly be applied to ourselves, in accordance with everyday usage, without any philosophical commitments and therefore neutral with respect to animality and personhood, in such a way that ‘human being’ as used by Parfit, really means ‘human animal’. It is in the former sense that I call myself a human being: a person that is currently human.

ii. *Human Personhood and Human Animality*

At this point though, we turn to a claim argued for strongly by Baker, that human animality and human personhood cannot both be ontologically significant properties, that is, human animality and human personhood cannot both be permanent and essential properties of human beings, as is embraced by scholastic animalism and denied by both contemporary animalism and personalism, for logically, this can only be the case if the property of being a human person just is the property of being a human animal, and vice versa. According to Baker, not only is there no grounds for making such a claim (2002, p. 384), but also that it is tantamount to eliminativism about persons (p. 385). This is a mistake.

In the first instance, Baker is really denying that there is any reason to make identity claims between persons in general and human animals, for she seems to make no reference to human persons, at least in her arguments, and does not distinguish them from persons. I quite agree that personhood and human animality are very different properties, but see it as an error to use ‘person’ and ‘human person’ interchangeably, especially, as Baker admits herself, given that ‘person’ is related to the Persons of the Trinity, who are definitely not human animals. Let us consider, then, what it is that distinguishes human persons from spiritual persons. Or to put it another way, what effect does adding the property of humanity have on personhood? Given that personhood in terms of self-consciousness could just as easily apply to human persons as spiritual persons, it seems that the concept ‘human person’ must require additional criteria only possessed by you and me, and not by God, angels etc. This is not necessarily the criteria that distinguishes us from the rest of the animal kingdom, though, for that may simply be personhood, but that which truly makes us human, as is reflected in our biology. For some personalists, this may be the bodies with which we share a decomposition, whereas for animalism, our bodies are essential to us.

One could say, therefore, that not only are there no a priori reasons to reject the claim that the properties of human personhood and human animality could be identical, but that there might be a priori reasons to accept it. One thought might be to view animality as part of the definition of human personhood, say by defining human persons as persons that are human, in the sense of belonging to the species *Homo sapiens*, as opposed to being human by ‘having’ a human body. Additionally, personhood could be seen to be part of the definition of human animal, on the grounds that human animals are animals that are (typically) self-consciousness, and self-conscious beings are persons. It does seem to be true that non-human animals possess no self-consciousness, though are clearly thinkers to some degree, but this says nothing about whether self-consciousness is a metaphysical possibility for such animals. It might just be that there are no such animals, apart from human beings, on Earth. Self-consciousness, then, might a property typically possessed by human animals, which makes them persons, though personalists would deny that it was the animal bearing the property.

Secondly, Baker rejects the identity claim on account of its being equivalent to eliminativism about persons. She seems to see this move as somehow devaluing persons or even denying their uniqueness. I wish to argue

instead that the claim that identity leads to eliminativism about persons in fact does a disservice not to personhood but to animality, denying its true significance. To explain this, I shall highlight Baker's argument, and demonstrate why I think it is false. Her view is that if being a human animal is identical to being a human person, then it must be the case that being an oyster is identical to being an oyster person. She writes: "If there is no such property as being an oyster person, then by parity of reasoning in the other direction, there is no such property as being a human person" (p. 382⁸⁹). Clearly, she concludes, this would result in eliminativism about persons, and so human animals cannot be the same as human persons. But this does not follow. The error in this reasoning should become clear when we consider how adding 'human' to 'animal' or 'person' changes the meaning. To use the term 'oyster animal' gives us no more information than simply 'oyster', but to add 'human' to 'animal', as an adjective, completely changes the meaning. As a result, there is no parallel between the terms 'human animal' and 'oyster'. Furthermore, it is not the case that 'human' in each case means the same thing.

There are perhaps two ways of explaining this. Firstly, as discussed, the adjective 'human' does not change each noun it is applied to in the same way. This sounds like an attempt to have the best of both worlds, but it is in fact remarkably common in the English language. For example, when we speak of a red ball, we imagine a colour quite different to the one in the description 'red hair', despite the same adjective being used both times. Furthermore, the meaning is different in the case of a cold bath than a cold ice cream, in accordance with the different scales applied in each case. It is for this reason that context is always so important. For 'human' then, the meaning is perhaps closest to 'person-like' in 'human animal', and yet stands for 'animal-like' in 'human person'. That is to say, human animals might be thought of as animal persons, and human persons might be thought as person animals. This is tricky for the personalist, though, as he does not want to allow that animals can be persons. Nonetheless, as discussed, to deny that animals can be persons risks denying that animals can think, so it is not obviously true that human animals should not be understood as animal persons. Essentially, then, the adjective is being used to specify type. For person, there are generally two types: human and spiritual (or 'non-human'). For animal, we typically speak of human and non-human. This can be explained with a similar example. Just as 'human' designates a type of a particular being, we also find that different species follow the same pattern. Take the Syrian hamster and the Syrian woodpecker, for instance. The Syrian hamster, a common childhood pet, may be distinguished from other types of hamsters in different ways. Likewise, the Syrian woodpecker has its own particular characteristics and habits unique to its species. Both are given the name 'Syrian', but the word signifies something different when applied to hamsters as to woodpeckers.

Continuing from this thought, then, it seems that there are some grounds for embracing both human animalism and human personalism's key claims, according to which human personhood and human animality are both permanent and essential properties of human beings. Furthermore, the identity thesis

⁸⁹ Baker, Lynne (2002)

could only result in eliminativism about persons⁹⁰ if a very narrow view of human animality were taken. For most personalists, there is nothing in the definition of human animal or human organism that differentiates human animals from non-human animals significantly enough. It is assumed by contemporary animalists also that human animals are not necessarily endowed with reason. It is this that scholastic animalism denies. For Aquinas, for example, to suggest that the identity thesis results in eliminativism about persons is to ignore what it really means to be a human animal. ‘Human animal’ has more than merely biological significance. It is not the role of a scientist to answer questions purely about the mind, or in the expertise of a psychologist to consider a human in terms of its species, but as metaphysicians, we can expect questions about human nature to fall into both these categories and others. The different terms may seem to prioritise the properties possessed by human beings, but if both animality and personhood are essential to human animals/human persons then there is truly no hierarchy at all; both are permanently and essentially properties of human beings. The viability of this for Aquinas, though, depends on the sense that can be made of his take on embryogenesis. We shall return to this later.

§4.2 – Scholastic Animalism and Contemporary Animalism

The Necessity and Sufficiency of Animality

This next section will focus particularly on the differences and similarities between scholastic animalism and contemporary animalism in the following three areas: animality as a necessary and sufficient property of human beings, the importance of the biological body for any theory of animalism, and importance of numerical identity in the persistence of human beings for the animalist account.

Putting aside the possible implications of the thesis that human beings are permanently and essentially human animals, then, our interests here lie in whether human animality is a sufficient and/or necessary property of human beings, as part of comparing and contrasting contemporary animalism with scholastic animalism. This section will therefore be devoted to considering how the three theories interrelate, in order to attempt to solve some of the issues we have already come across.

Firstly, given that both theories are forms of animalism, it makes sense to discuss how the property of animality is understood in each case, and how this in turn relates to the previous discussion on permanent and essential properties. Animality is typically understood to be a biological property, marking human beings out as members of the animal kingdom. For Aquinas, given the lack of knowledge of DNA and understanding of different species available in the scholastic period⁹¹, the concept of human animality is drawn from his reading of Aristotle’s account of man as a biological organism, as well as his interpretation of biblical Scripture. He takes both as supporting the view that man is like other living beings, namely, an

⁹⁰ Although Baker does not, we should say ‘human person’ here, as no-one would want to claim that human animals and persons are the same thing.

⁹¹ Though it seems reasonable to assume that Aquinas would embrace these new ideas if they had been available to him, given his commitment to current scientific practice

animal, made alive by a soul. Similarly, contemporary animalism holds to an account of human nature whereupon human beings are to be understood as being biologically no different from other animals, though they may have mental superiority. It seems therefore that when both groups of theorists speak of human beings in terms of their animality, they are referring to properties of the same kind, that is, biological properties. The statement ‘we are animals’ is true for both parties.

Furthermore, for both contemporary and scholastic animalists, the statement ‘we are necessarily animals’ is also true. Not only is animality seen as a part of human nature, but it is essential to us simpliciter. That is to say, not only would we cease to be human animals if we were not animals, but we would cease to exist altogether. We cannot persist as anything other than biological organisms. Nonetheless, the scholastic animalist would take another step at this point that the contemporary animalist would not. It is necessary for the former that we are not only animals, but human animals, at all stages of our lives, where ‘human animal’ stands for a living being with all the characteristics of what was previously referred to as a human person, that is, an animal with a human soul. For the majority of contemporary animalists, on the other hand, this is not essential. Instead, they allow that each of us be numerically identical with the embryo at the point when it becomes a separate living organism⁹². In the first chapter, we described such a being as human, but not even potentially *a* human, in accordance with how one would define ‘a human’. It seems, then, that the contemporary animalist would allow my existence to start at an earlier stage than the scholastic animalist would. Further debate on this issue, however, involves far more time than is available to us, and so we shall neither attempt to redefine ‘human being’, as would be necessary to say that even a mid-term foetus is covered by the term, nor the requirements for life, given that there is clearly a sense in which living organisms are alive, and single cells, though they too are alive, are not. Instead, it should simply be stated that scholastic animalism requires a mind to be present for a being to be called a human animal, and contemporary animalism does not. It might be misleading, therefore, to suggest that for both parties, the statement ‘I am necessarily a human animal’ is true, as the term ‘human animal’ stands for something different in each case.

ii. *The Role of the Body*

Another similarity between the two theories is that of how they regard the biological body. As discussed in the second chapter, contemporary animalism may be organic or somatic, where the former claims that each of us ceases to exist at the point when we die, and the latter only requires that our bodies maintain their structure for us to persist. Apparently, then, the role of life will differ for the two kinds of contemporary animalists, but that of body will not, whereby a body is necessary for existence/persistence. Having a physical, organic body is clearly an essential part of what it is to be an animal, and having this particular kind of body an essential part of what it means to be a human animal. Furthermore, it seems that because animality is defined in terms of the corporeal, having a (living⁹³) human body is not only a necessary

⁹² This refers to the stage at which the embryo has its own life, as a separate living being.

⁹³ Animalists can hold that dead human beings still have human bodies, even though they are not animals.

condition for being a human animal, but also sufficient. As a result, having a (living) human body must also be necessary and sufficient for human being-hood.

Scholastic animalists hold a similar view. Given that human persons are living beings, they are said to consist of an incorporeal soul informing an organic body. This hylomorphic relationship between soul and body, or form and matter, is typically understood to be such that man cannot persist outside the body. There is a sense too in which the body is not only a necessary part of being a human being, but it is sufficient for it. As discussed in the first chapter, 'body' can refer to the matter that makes up a human being, as well as the composite that is the human person. It is in the definition of a living human body, therefore, that because it must be ensouled with a human soul to be alive, it necessarily has both the properties of animality and personhood. On the other hand, it is not true that the body, of which the soul is the form, is also sufficient. The material body cannot exist without its form, in the same way that matter without form is no complete individual.

Thus far, the two theories agree upon these issues, at least under one interpretation or other, but there does seem to be some debate as to whether it is necessary (and/or sufficient) for each human being to have a particular body in order to be the particular animal he or she is. Firstly, though, one must become clear on what it means to have 'a particular body' to avoid any scope ambiguity surrounding the word 'particular'. This is best explained in terms of numerical and qualitative identity. For example, it might be true that the students all read a particular book, but we do not know whether each student read numerically identical books, that is, they all read the same copy, or qualitatively identical books – different copies of the same book. It is the same with 'a particular body'. It may be that I could have a body that is numerically non-identical to the one I have now and still be me, but that I must at least have a qualitatively identical body (up to a point⁹⁴), as is perhaps determined by my DNA. For contemporary animalism, it seems, having this particular body numerically, and to some extent qualitatively, is essential for being this particular human animal, for a different body would indicate a different human animal. In addition, given that each of us is the human animal that we are, and therefore consists of the human body we have, it would make no sense to speak of body swaps; this only works if a human being can be identified with his or her mind or brain. Given then the apparent impossibility of one having a numerically different body from the one he has – on account of persistence depending on either continued life or bodily organisation – there is no room either for a qualitatively identical body to be sufficient for persistence. It appears to be true, therefore, that contemporary animalists do require a human being to have a particular body (in both senses) in order to persist.

There is, however, a possible problem with the assertion that one must have numerically the same body throughout his existence in order to continue to exist. This concerns the question of how much change it is

⁹⁴ It is accepted that human beings can undergo a number of organ transplants, but how much change in DNA is possible, before one might argue that the resulting human being is a different one from the previously existing human being, is too involved a matter to go into here. We should be aware, however, that qualitative identity can only be established up to a point.

possible for our bodies to undergo before we cease to exist. The kind of changes we are interested in here are those associated with growth, the constant replacement of the majority of the cells in the body, and actual damage involving the loss of body parts. In the case of growth, though, it is apparent that very little has changed about the organism's structure, but this perhaps becomes more difficult when we consider how cells die and regenerate over time. It is a common misconception that all of the cells in a human body are renewed every seven years or so, when actually it has been shown that the majority of brain cells last a lifetime, as well as a large number of muscle cells, especially those in the heart. It is for this reason that some bodily damage can be permanent, as explains the need for organ transplants. It is also true, that any cells that are replaced – at least naturally – contain the same DNA, demonstrating that they belong to that particular living organism. There is good reason to believe, therefore, that no natural change of the body will have any effect on an individual's numerical identity. Furthermore, these issues will only be of consequence to the somatic animalist, given that in the case of organic animalism, an animal remains numerically the same up until death.

Does this apply to non-natural changes though? It seems strange to question the identity of an individual following the loss of a couple of limbs, or even organs, but where should we draw the line? Given that it is possible for a human being to be born without any limbs, there is clearly no issue with merely a head and torso being a complete human animal. Perhaps any less than this and we might start to question the identity of a particular being, but it is unlikely that one could survive without a torso for very long anyway. The only exception being conjoined twins, where significant parts of their bodies are shared, and one could argue that though they may be two persons, they are only one animal. The animalist's best response is to say that they are two overlapping animals with two overlapping bodies.

The question of whether each of us must have a particular body, however, is fairly clear for the scholastic animalist, and especially Aquinas. Nonetheless, the nature of form and matter is such that each of us must have a particular body and soul *during our earthly lives*, and so there is nothing *prima facie* metaphysically impossible with our having numerically or qualitatively different bodies following the death of the first body. This is because we are said to cease to exist until the resurrection of the body, on the grounds that a separated soul is not a person. Instead, Aquinas holds that our souls, functioning separately prior to this, reanimate our newly resurrected bodies. However, although the properties of the resurrection body demonstrate that it cannot be qualitatively identical to the earthly body, it seems unlikely that it could be entirely qualitatively different, given that the soul that must inhabit it is essentially unchanged. Furthermore, because it is the whole human animal (soul and body) with which each of us is numerically identical, there is something about my particular body that makes me 'me', such that, were I to have had another body, I would have been a different person. For Aquinas, souls are 'made to measure' according to the particular bodies they will animate. In the same way, a particular soul fits a particular body; this soul belongs to that body. It is, therefore, not possible for any of us to have a numerically different body at any time.

On the other hand, it seems highly unlikely that each of us will have numerically identical resurrection bodies to the one we had during our earthly lives. It is not impossible that some of us could have numerically the same body throughout the whole of our existence, as we do for the whole of our earthly existence, but for some, the earthly body will have been destroyed beyond repair at or after death. Perhaps it is not outside the realms of possibility for an omnipotent God to bring together all the fragments of a cremated body and fashion a new one, as indeed the Scriptures say he will call forth even the bodies from the depths of the sea, but it is not necessary that this happen for the body to be an essential part of each human being.

As far as our earthly lives go, however, the role of the body for both the scholastic and the contemporary animalist is almost the same, in that both theories require not only that a human being has a particular body, but that he *is* a particular body, a living body.

iii. *Numerical Identity and Animalism*

The numerical identity of each individual's bodily matter, according to each theory, is a difficult matter, but the understanding of numerical identity for each human being is much more straightforward. Given that each of us is a human animal, and a human animal is nothing more than a living organic body, there is a sense in which, for the contemporary animalist, each of us is identical to a living organic body. If, then, it is not possible for us to continue to exist without our bodies, our existence must be predicated the existence of such. That is to say, each of our identities is reducible to the identity of a particular living body, whereby the loss of life or the significant de-structuring of the organic parts – whichever comes first – would imply the end of persistence. If, for example, there existed any being that is not numerically identical to me, that being would have no claim to be me.

However, there is a problem with the view that the identity of a human being can be reduced to the identity of that human being's living body, a problem moreover that does not exist for the scholastic animalist, given the importance placed upon the soul or mind. This issue stems from the earlier discussion regarding how much can be lost from a human being's body before he either ceases to exist or ceases to be a human animal. Generally, there is no issue with the transplantation of various vital organs, despite the mixing of DNA, but it seems hard to accept that the same would apply were we to transplant a whole head⁹⁵ or even significant portions of the brain, say a whole hemisphere. One should consider, however, exactly why this might be. On the one hand, there is a question of practical possibility, while on the other, the issue is one of metaphysical possibility. In the case of the latter, there is either something significant about the brain/spinal-cord in terms of the role it plays in the identification and existence of a particular animal, or this is a mereological question, concerning how much of one's body, or how many parts are required for him to continue to exist.

⁹⁵ Such an experiment has been proposed by an Italian medic, who claims to have successfully transplanted the head of one monkey onto the body of another and hopes to give a new lease of life to a paralytic. However, his research has been heavily criticised, and few medics actually have any faith in the procedure.

Considering the commitments of the contemporary animalist, it seems unlikely that he should want to assign levels of importance to the parts of the human body, unless it can be proven that one part is more significant in determining species than any other. Arguably this is true of the human brain, given its greatly increased complexity compared to the brain of any other living being, but it is probably more significant that the brain plays a vital role in the life of the animal than anything else. Nonetheless, if it were possible⁹⁶ for a whole head or brain to be transplanted, without interrupting the life of the human animal, the brain's role in keeping the being alive would be of little importance. Instead, if the contemporary animalist wanted to deny that the human animal with the newly transplanted head/brain were numerically identical to the original human animal, he would have to take both the view that this is too big a change for a human being to survive, such that the original human being has ceased to exist (and probably also died), and that any living human being remaining is a completely new one. Both the questions 'do I survive the transplantation of my head/brain into another body?' and 'do I survive the transplantation of a new head/brain into my body?' would therefore be answered negatively.

On the other hand, the contemporary animalist could take the view that the removal and replacement of the original head/brain does not affect identity, perhaps on the grounds that the majority of the body remains unaffected, or that there is nothing special about the head/brain, in terms of its characterisation of species, which does not seem very plausible. The result of this would be that the original human being still exists but with the head/brain of another human being, as with Toner's hylemorphic animalism. Although difficult to accept, the animalist's position is such that this interpretation is open to him, and yet without some sense of the importance of the brain/mind in his ontology, it seems doubtful that he will be able to answer numerical identity questions of this kind.

This, then, is the main difference between contemporary and scholastic animalism. While the former holds that numerical identity is maintained provided the body is still sufficiently structured and/or life continues, the latter requires the continuation of the mind in addition to the body. The scholastic animalist can therefore reject any such possibilities of head/brain transplants, on the grounds that the mind/soul and the body are connected in such a way that their separation results in the discontinuation of the existence of the human being in question. Furthermore, organs themselves cannot survive transplantation on this view; all that remains is matter. Currently, scholastic animalism is in step with modern medical knowledge, according to which the brain is too complex and essential to even be transplanted in part, and the nature of the brainstem such that it is impossible to reconnect once it has been severed from the spinal cord. While there is no way to guarantee that such research could never be completed, it is worth noting how current knowledge ties in with a theory of mind and body as one composite substance. This does not include the process of organ transplantation, however. It is assumed that a separated heart, liver etc. is still a heart, liver etc. and therefore can be transplanted into another body, while remaining a heart, liver etc. Aquinas cannot account for why the organ continues to function once it has been re-sited, though in the light of modern research, he

⁹⁶ See footnote 6

would likely want to work these ideas into his theory. This is another whole discussion though, and there is no time to consider it here.

Following on from the above thoughts, then, persistence relies both on the continuation of the body and soul, and – under a hylomorphic understanding – the living body (the composite). The life of each human being/human person cannot begin until the criterion of human body informed by human soul is met. Likewise, at the point of death, soul and body are separated, and the human being ceases to exist until the soul is united with a new body. Whether or not one believes in the resurrection of the body, such an account of persistence need not be readily dismissed. For, neither of the animalist accounts allows a human being to persist beyond the point where he is a complete (living) entity, as is to be expected of a view that considers animality to be the most important aspect of what it is to be a human being. As a result, contemporary and scholastic animalism also have it in common that survival (in terms of persistence) is dependent upon numerical identity, which requires each human being to have a particular body, either numerically or qualitatively.

§4.3 – Scholastic Animalism and Contemporary Personalism

The Necessity and Sufficiency of Personhood

Having considered how scholastic animalism compares to and differs from popular view in contemporary animalism, in this section we shall attempt to explore the similarities and differences between scholastic animalism and contemporary personalism. In particular, we are interested in the property of personhood and its significance to the theories, the identity of the mind, and how the relationship between mind and body affects our understanding of the kind of beings we are. These are discussed in the following three subsections.

The incompatibility of the contemporary animalist and personalist positions seems to result from the insistence that either human animality or human personhood is both necessary and sufficient to explain human being-hood, and that it is not possible for there to be any necessary links between them. Although this may be true for animality and personhood in general, this says nothing about the relationship between human animality and human personhood. On the other hand, there is some value in discussing the property of personhood generally, for the term is really only applied to human beings, and not to any other living organisms, though certain divine and spiritual beings, for example, God and angels, may be included.

Even though the property of personhood may be understood differently among those calling themselves personalists, all seem to require persons to have self-consciousness or first-person perspective at all times, such that their loss equates to the end of existence, whether or not biological life continues. It is in this sense that personhood is regarded as a permanent and essential property of human beings [by which I mean ‘us’]. Unlike animality, personhood is considered to be a psychological property, with little or no relation to the

biological. For this reason, it makes just as much sense to apply it to the kind of beings we are, as well as such beings as God and angels, but not to any other kinds of living organisms that lack self-consciousness, no matter how similar to us they may appear. Such biological similarities are irrelevant to a study of human beings as persons. Instead, what matters is our ability to be rational and introspective, attributes we do not seem to share with animals.

Although one might use the term ‘human being’ to refer to oneself, for the contemporary personalist, there is no requirement for personhood to be a constitutive property of human animals. As a result, there is no issue with the concept of a human animal that is not a person, as one might consider the case with the early term foetus in the womb, or someone with significant brain damage. As a result, personhood is seen as a permanent and essential property of whatever we are, but not of human animals *per se*. In terms of our persistence then, we cannot continue to exist as anything other than persons.

Furthermore, as well as personhood being a necessary property of human beings [by which I mean ‘us’], being a person, which implies having self-consciousness, is also sufficient for our survival. However, this does not logically negate the possibility of our being also something other than persons. For some personalists, for example Lynn Rudder Baker, we are persons who happen to be (non-identity-expressing sense) animals, that is, by sharing a decomposition with an animal, while for others, we ourselves are not animals but are in some way connected to an animal. But even so, the personalist’s commitment to personhood as a permanent and essential property of human beings cannot be equivalent to the denial that human beings are essentially animals, or essentially embodied, even if the contemporary anti-animalist personalist in fact accepts both the essentiality of personhood to human beings [by which I mean ‘us’] and the accidentality of animality and embodiment to human beings.

This is not so for scholastic animalism. Instead, because it is not simply personhood that is a permanent and essential property of human beings, but *human* personhood, the scholastic animalist considers the property of personhood to be necessary but not sufficient for human being-hood. Human beings are not persons at all unless they are also animals. Furthermore, any difficulty associated with the logical impossibility of two vastly different properties both belonging permanently and essentially to human beings is dissolved on the grounds that human personhood and human animality are the same property. However, as with ‘human animal’, the term ‘human person’ has different intensions for the scholastic animalist than the contemporary personalist. While the latter (as understood to mean ‘us-persons’, given that humanity may very well not be an essential property of whatever we are), assumes only those essential properties associated with the general concept ‘person’, the former also includes essential properties of human animals.

The Identity of Mind

On the other hand, scholastic animalism and contemporary personalism have it in common that they regard the mind as being essential for survival. This is because human personhood is defined according to the

principle of self-consciousness, which in turn demonstrates what it is to have a mind. It is for this reason that being the same person depends on having the same mind. The personalist, for example, allows for all kinds of changes to occur within a person's body, but none of these changes may have a significant impact on the mind if persistence is to be preserved. In the case of the scholastic animalist, the mind/soul is not only an essential part of what it is to be a person, but necessary for the human being to continue to live. This is not required for the contemporary personalist, given the possibility of a human animal continuing to exist without sharing a decomposition with a person.

In terms of persistence, however, holding onto mindedness is a necessary condition. Not only must a person have a mind in order to persist, but he must have the same mind at all times at which he exists. For the contemporary personalist, therefore, the nature of the mind is such that it can in no way be equal to the brain. While a brain is not actually necessary for the persistence of the human person, in terms of its bodily matter, the person cannot persist with his mind. The physical body is not essential for personhood; it merely supports the mind at the present time. It is metaphysically possible, therefore, that something else could support the mind instead, perhaps advanced mechanical and computer technology. So saying, it has long been the desire of scientists one day to transfer a person's consciousness, perhaps as a way of re-citing the mind, to a machine. This is both a physical and metaphysical possibility under the contemporary personalist paradigm.

While the necessity of the mind should not be understated, for the scholastic animalist, neither should it be taken to be the single most important aspect of what it is to be a person. There is more to a human person than his consciousness. We have spoken already about the necessity of animality, but really a person is more than even his mind and body. While for some, the soul and the mind are the same, this usage is both misleading and inconsistent with the scholastic animalist approach taken by Aquinas, for whom the soul makes a human being both alive and a rational being. In the former case, the impression is given that a person is nothing more than material body and consciousness. This excludes the main role of the soul as the first principle of life, an aspect of the whole soul and not merely the intellect. It would be better, therefore, to compare the mind with the intellect, given that both are considered responsible for self-consciousness and rational activity. Furthermore, Aquinas himself uses two different terms: soul for the form of the body, the life principle of living things, and intellect, as the power of the soul (and included in soul) responsible for the higher powers of mind possessed only by human beings and no other living organism. It is only the intellect then that can rightly be called mind alone, for the soul has many powers, at least during the human being's earthly life.

On the other hand, the personalist's understanding of mind and the scholastic animalist's understanding of intellect are such that both consider the faculty of self-consciousness to be in some way separate from the body. The mind has a somewhat contingent relationship with the body, or at least the brain, such that it theoretically could be separated and still function exactly the same. Likewise, the Thomistic intellect is said to be the act of no body, and will continue to function following its separation, prior to resurrection. Another

similarity, between mind and intellect, is that the identity of the mind/intellect equates to the identity of the person. Directly in the case of the personalist, two persons are the same if and only if they have the same mind. For the scholastic animalist, although the mind/intellect is not sufficient for the existence of the human person, the final cause of the continued existence of the same intellect is the same person. This is because one can only have the same mind/intellect if one has the same soul, and having the same soul is only possible where a particular body exists, for the disembodied soul belongs to no body. Thus, the criteria are met for the persistence of a particular person. Ultimately, scholastic animalism and contemporary personalism have in common that the mind/intellect is necessary for persistence.

The key difference between the two theories, however, concerns the role of the mind/intellect for persistence. This is most clearly demarcated by how each theorist might understand life after death. There is nothing in the general theory of scholastic animalism that requires one to believe in the afterlife, just as there is nothing about contemporary personalism that prevents such a state being at least metaphysically possible. For argument's sake then, let us suppose that there is some kind of life after death, in order to explain the link between mind/intellect and the person. The contemporary personalist's account requires only that the mind continues to function. Such an account fits with a common view of the afterlife, whereby the person leaves his body and goes on to a better life, while the body, which is really just an empty shell, is buried or cremated now that it is no longer needed. Even in the afterlife, then, the mind is still necessary and sufficient for persistence.

Conversely, the role of the mind for the scholastic animalist, is such that there is no sense in which a person can leave his body behind. A person consists of mind, body and soul necessarily, and so he could only go directly to heaven say, if he took his body with him. Instead, the soul (which includes the mind) alone departs, leaving the material part of the person behind. He can only (fully) exist again with a new or renewed body. Therefore, for the scholastic animalist, the identity of the mind has a crucial role to play in the persistence of each person, but unlike with contemporary personalism, it is not the only factor, as we have seen.

A Question of Species

Finally, then, given that a good account of the metaphysics of human nature should be both compatible and consistent with current scientific knowledge, it is necessary to discuss how scholastic animalism and contemporary personalism fit with what we know about the biology of species. As was considered in the second chapter, the nature of human beings [by which I mean 'human animals'] as biological organisms belonging to the animal kingdom is regarded as a fact of science. The question that remains is that of how each theory might interpret these claims.

In the first instance, as we have seen, scholastic animalism already views man (that is, human beings) as a biological organism, a member of the animal kingdom, under the current scientific paradigm. However,

given that scholastic animalism dates back to before the beginning of modern science, this may be purely coincidental. It just so happens that the mediaeval conception of man as different from what is termed brute animals, though still himself an animal, is supported by the modern scientific understanding of a human being – that is, *Homo sapiens* – as a primate, a mammal, and therefore, belonging to the animal kingdom. Nonetheless, credit should still be given to Aristotle, from whom Aquinas takes these ideas, for his somewhat impressive understanding for the time.

In addition, scholastic animalism is built around a biblical account of man, where persons and animals are compared on matters of animality, differing only at the spiritual level. Although human beings and non-human animals have different kinds of souls, this is generally understood at the level of powers of soul, such that human beings have all the powers possessed by animals and more, though these differences in powers are grounded in intrinsic differences between brute souls and human souls. As a result, though, human beings can be understood to be at least animals, specifically rational animals. Such a view is perfectly compatible with the scientific view of human beings as biological organisms.

On the other hand, the contemporary personalist does not want to make the leap from human person to human being to human animal. He would therefore be tempted to reject an account of human beings as biological organisms, or else that of human persons as human beings. It was said previously, that the term ‘human being’ should be considered neutral with respect to personhood and animality, however, this can only be the case if ‘human being’ is not synonymous with ‘*Homo sapiens*’, as is generally assumed. If not, then ‘human being’ is not neutral with respect to animality, as is denied by contemporary personalism. The main issue is with the notion of human persons as biological organisms, and therefore, us as biological organisms.

However, if there is no sense in which we are biological organisms, contemporary personalism cannot be considered compatible with that which is regarded as scientific fact. As a result, the anti-animalist personalist (which includes most of the known contemporary personalists) has no choice but to reject science (not an attractive proposition) or else modify his theory. Most commonly, according to Olson, personalists tend to deny the truth of the proposition ‘[human] persons are animals’. Nonetheless, some, such as Lynn Rudder Baker, prefer to view human persons as being constituted by animals, in an attempt to maintain personalist principles without being at odds with science. The personalist can then say that human persons are (non-identity-expressing sense) currently biological organisms, though not essentially. Seeing as science does not hold that we are necessarily or permanently biological organisms, therefore, this is sufficient to account for man’s alleged animality. Some personalists have also suggested that science does not commit us to a view of human persons as being identical to animals, though the notion of ‘are’ in a non-identity-expressing sense is not very scientific. If human persons are not identical to animals, but instead share decompositions with them, it seems unlikely that a scientist would ever say that we are *Homo sapiens*, as they do.

Aside from the constitution view, some personalists prefer an account of human persons as parts of animals, for example, Parfit. Both views seem to get around the problem of being persons and animals, despite human persons not being numerically identical to animals, but, there is still a distinct difference between contemporary personalism and scholastic animalism on how the terms ‘human person’ and ‘human being’ are understood, a matter that is without general agreement. For the scholastic animalist, there is neither a difference in the meanings of the terms ‘human person’, ‘human being’, and ‘human animal’, nor their intensions. Conversely, for the contemporary personalist, each term is used differently. ‘Human person’ refers only to what we might call ourselves, that is, a person currently sharing a decomposition/existing as a part of an animal. The human person is then the person with various extra non-essential properties, particularly those of a corporeal nature. However, while this is the usual understanding of ‘human being’ in general discourse, it is not unusual for philosophers to use ‘person’ or ‘human person’, and ‘human being’ interchangeably. When most personalists say that we are human beings, they do not mean that we are constituted by human beings, or in any sense connected to something that is a human being; the relation is one of numerical identity. Human beings [by which I mean ‘us’] are persons, and human persons, at least, are human beings. On the other hand, the contemporary personalist might see ‘human being’ as a difficult term, for there is a sense in which we, as persons, call ourselves human beings, and there is a sense in which we might call the human animal we share a decomposition with, a human being.

It seems, therefore, that the main difference between contemporary personalism and scholastic animalism is that while the latter highlights the equal importance of the properties of human animality and human personhood for human being-hood, and therefore our persistence, the former only requires animal properties for *human* personhood, which is not necessary for our persistence, given that humanity may not be essential to us.

§4.4 – The Metaphysics of Human Persons

A Defence of Scholastic Animalism

Having reconsidered how scholastic animalism compares and contrasts with contemporary accounts of animalism and personalism, in this final section, I shall attempt to make the case for scholastic animalism as a theory about the metaphysics of human persons, in the following six subsections. Firstly, we shall consider the views to which one must be committed in order to endorse the scholastic animalist position, and therefore those views that must be rejected. This will involve discussing the main issues with anti-personalism and anti-animalism, including those questions still left unanswered, as well as any further problems with the theories themselves, as will be the task of the next two subsections. In the fourth subsection, we will discuss the ways in which scholastic animalism may be seen to be an improvement on the previous accounts of the essential nature of human beings. Penultimately, I shall consider again Aquinas’ responses to the implications scholastic animalism has for our understanding of our personal identity from the first moment of existence onwards, including the afterlife, and to attempt to resolve any problems with its application.

Finally, we will look at any remaining issues with hylomorphism of body and soul, as a theory of metaphysics, and consider how the relationship between body and soul may be understood differently from the Thomistic sense, without undermining scholastic animalism as a theory about human beings.

To be a scholastic animalist, one must ascribe to four theories: animalism, personalism, human animalism (strong animalism) and human personalism (strong personalism), according to which we, who call ourselves human beings, are essentially both human persons and human animals, where the persistence conditions of human persons just are the persistence conditions of human animals.

In a contemporary light, the case for scholastic animalism may be seen as the case against both phase sortalism about persons (anti-human-personalism), and anti-animalism. As mentioned, one can hold that we can be essentially animals and essentially human animals, without holding that we are only accidentally human persons or accidentally persons, although, holding to the view of ‘human person’ as a phase sortal term does happen to be a popular view among animalists. Nonetheless, denying that human personhood is a permanent and essential property of human beings, or perhaps personhood in general, regardless of whether this seems to be necessary for maintaining human animalism, seems to have some disturbing consequences, especially concerning the coming-to-be of a new being, and the apparent ‘subjectification’ of beings that were there previously, but were not subjects of experience. The question that remains, then, is that of whether scholastic animalism, and thereby the combination of human animalism and human personalism, can offer better solutions.

We begin, then, by looking at two major issues relating to what it is to be a human being according to contemporary personalism and animalism. Firstly, there is a question about how the property we have called human personhood can apply to such things as us, who seem to be accidentally human. Likewise, if human animality belongs to us necessarily, in what sense are we persons? These then relate to another significant issue, that of personal identity, subjectivity, and the link between ontology and persistence.

Personalism and ‘Human’ Personhood

It was assumed at the start of this research that the mark of contemporary personalism is its commitment to personhood as a permanent and essential property of human beings. As a result, the persistence of human beings [by which I mean ‘us’], and therefore persons, concerns the continuation of their mental lives, while the human animal each one of us shares a decomposition with continues if and only if its biological life continues. On this interpretation, though, there is still the risk that at the point when the mind, and therefore the person, comes into existence, we now have two beings and not one. Furthermore, even if take Parfit’s view that the person is just a part of the animal, it is still difficult to explain how it is that each of us seem to come from nowhere. Nonetheless, the alternative has its own problems. According to the neo-Lockean interpretation, to which both Baker and Shoemaker subscribe, our persistence depends on psychological continuity, and therefore nothing purely bodily, or organic, can account for our personhood. As such, one

must either reject the view that we are essentially 'human', according to which we are only human because we have human bodies, or make a case for what it is about us-persons that makes us different from spiritual etc. persons. Neither seems to have a satisfactory end.

In the former case, we have a view something like Bakers', whereby we are essentially persons, and are only human persons because we are constituted by a human animal/body. These bodies, though, are not essential to us, such that we could continue to exist without them. Therefore, our humanity is not essential to us either, and we are only accidentally human. Furthermore, the property of human personhood is not seen as belonging permanently and essentially to human beings, and so 'human person' cannot be a permanence sortal term. As discussed in the previous chapter, Baker does actually both say that persons are human because of their contingently-possessed human bodies, and that *human* personhood is ontologically significant, that is, a permanent and essentially property of human beings, which is a contradiction. Unless there is something non-organic about our personhood that makes us human, it cannot be true that 'human person' is a permanence sortal term, only 'person' is. However, if human personhood is not a permanent and essential property of human beings, there is no kind of person that we necessarily are; we are just persons. In order to create non-organic criteria for human being-hood though, one would need to separate the concept 'human' from its biological roots, given that sharing a decomposition with a human animal is not necessary for persistence. How might one do this? There is a sense in which, while human beings are the highest of the animals, they are also the lowest of the kinds of things we might call persons. This would exclude the possibility of robots and other animals being persons, but it is likely that if we were to assign this term to them, it would be on account of their similarities to us, and not, as perhaps with God and angels, because they are in some way greater beings. The Bible states that human beings were made in the image of God, such that if there are such things as spiritual persons, it seems that we are like a copy of them, made to be something like them in whatever sense. Copies⁹⁷, generally, are less perfect than the original, as is seen by photocopying a document; it is always less clear and less detailed than the first.

If us-persons, then, are different from other persons, it is likely that this is on account of properties we lack, or limited potential. As Aquinas says regarding the afterlife, the human soul still has the ability to understand when separated from the body, and it does so in the same way as the angels, but much less perfectly, for it was not designed that way. But what are these properties? There is no time here to conduct an in-depth study of personhood as pertaining to us-persons and spiritual persons, but if one is to make the case for human being-hood as a non-organic property, he would need to be clear on the criteria for human personhood in this sense.

Alternatively, the personalist can just accept that human personhood is not a permanent and essential property of human beings, and that being human is not essential to us. This, though, seems to result in the same problem. Not only are human beings not essentially human persons, but human beings are not

⁹⁷ This does not apply to clones, however, for clones are not true copies. They merely start out with the same DNA.

essentially human beings. So, are we essentially any particular kind of being/person? The personalist suggests that we are just beings, just persons. How can this be true though, unless one can prove that there is no reason to believe that there are any other kinds of beings and persons, even conceptually? Furthermore, if it is true, then one is left with a further problem of defining what exactly we essentially are; unless us-persons are the only persons, and us-beings are the only beings, the terms 'being' and 'person' have no clear reference point. We could call ourselves anything we like, and it would not help us answer any metaphysical questions about what it is to be *x*. If we are not essentially human persons, the most one could say is that we are non-essentially not angel/divine persons, which seems troubling. While some people in ordinary life hold the belief that deceased persons become angels, this is very much at odds with Scripture, and would be considered impossible by Aquinas. In fact, the denial that we are persons in a sense quite different from any other persons would result in the need to abandon the whole of this discussion and start again from scratch. Not only is this not an attractive option, but there is no good reason to do so. The burden of proof is surely on personalism to resolve these difficulties, for otherwise it seems not only do we not know much about the essence of us-personhood, but we cannot say anything about what it is to be essentially us-persons. The most we can say for sure is that us-persons are different from other persons in that they start life sharing a decomposition with a human animal.

On the other hand, were to we adopt a theory of personhood similar to Parfit's, such that the person is seen as a part of the whole human animal, though the only essential part for personal persistence, human personhood, as opposed to us-personhood, may not be such a difficult property to account for. For Parfit, for example, it does seem to be necessary that a part of the actual brain remains in order for the person to persist (2012). Parfit does not indicate what part or parts these might be, but neither does he think it likely that a person can continue to exist separate from his or her human brain. The question that remains, therefore, is that of whether consisting of a part of a human brain is enough to make a person, as the subject of thought, human. To answer this, let us first consider in what way a human brain is human. In one sense, human brains are called human because they belong to a living organism that is a human being. In another, human brains are called human on account of their structure and relevant DNA; no other living creature has a brain like a human being. Can this, then, be extrapolated to human persons? On the one hand, human persons might be called human because they are part of living organisms that are human. On the other hand, human persons might be called 'human' because they are part of a living organism with human DNA. However, if being a part of a living human animal is not necessary for the continued existence of a human person, then persons cannot remain human (in terms of species) outside the organic body. 'Human' therefore cannot point to species in this sense. Nonetheless, there is a precedent for claiming that some of the human DNA must remain in the part(s) of the brain needed for personal persistence. If so, Parfit, at least, can claim that human personhood is a permanent and essential property of human beings, on account of their persistence as beings necessarily consisting of human DNA. Although he does not actually discuss any of these issues, one could argue that he would accept them on account of his insistence that we are only not human beings in the sense

of being human animals, which says nothing about our status as human beings qua human persons. It may be denied that our animality is essential to us, but not our human being-hood.

However, one must ask whether this is actually an ontological claim about human persons, or just coincidence based on our current knowledge of neurobiology. At present, science tells us that the brain and the mind are related, in such a way that it is doubtful that we could have psychological continuity without at least some part of the brain remaining intact. If, though, this could in some way be replicated by a mechanical brain, neo-Lockeans would have no reason to suppose that persons could not persist under these conditions. The nature of such account is that the human body plays no necessary role in the persistence of each individual person. At most, then, there is only a requirement for human persons to be human-like. With no human DNA, and without a human body, it is hard to see how a human person exists at all. Once again, actual 'human' personhood is not a permanent and essential property of human beings; only personhood is.

Animalism's Ontology

Nonetheless, the situation seems equally problematic for the anti-personalist. This time, instead of human beings having *human* personhood, they are seen to be accidentally persons. As discussed, there are forms of animalism that do not allow personhood to be an accidental property, in accordance with its relation to human animality, but this is not the popular view as expressed by Olson, Snowdon and Mackie. For these three philosophers, it is only essential to us human beings that we remain human animals, with or without personhood. As a result, we do not need self-consciousness to persist, or even to be alive (according to Mackie). It is perhaps easier to believe that we could be human non-persons than non-human persons, but is it really enough for us to have human animal properties and nothing more to still be considered a *human* person? Or rather, is it enough for one to have human animal properties and nothing more and still be himself? While human animality may consist in nothing more than belonging to the right biological kind, human being-hood in general seems to require more than this.

This, then, we might call our true humanity. Most studies into the essence of humanity, involve far more than biological facts about the species. Instead, they look into characteristics, relational attributes, and culture. Furthermore, many people would consider these things to be essential to us human beings, but the animalist cannot account for any of these in an ontology of human being-hood that does not even require at least the potential for consciousness. Even from the point when each of us first exists, perhaps around implantation, there is coding in the healthy embryo to develop the parts and therefore properties required to become a full-grown adult human being. This though cannot be fully explained in biological terms, so the most the animalist can say is that mental states supervene on brain states, such that a brain of a particular kind, in a particular state, can give rise to what we call the mind, and therefore the human being that is now called a person. Nonetheless, it is the animal who thinks he has a mind, or rather, thinks he is a person. Yet surely only an animal sophisticated enough to be a person can think he is a person, for only the kind of animal who is a person has a brain suitable for the right kind of cognition to know he is a person. If I am an animal and

not a person, I cannot have the self-consciousness to know what I am. The sense of 'I' therefore no longer applies. What, then, does it mean to say "I persist when ..." unless there is an awareness of 'I' at all times I persist from the point when I first had this awareness? Again, the idea that the potential to have this awareness is essential to me is not obviously unintuitive.

Mostly, this is a personal identity issue, but it also calls into question the sense of the animalist ontology: 'we are essentially (human) animals'. Non-human animals cannot even make this claim meaningfully. I see no reason to believe as some do that thinking at all is outside the limits of non-human animal brains, but neither do I think that a cat ponders its existence or has the ability to understand the difference between right and wrong. As such, it seems that there is nothing meaningful in the claim 'we are essentially human animals', as said by us, unless our being human and therefore being human animals includes having at least the potential for self-consciousness as a necessary property of us-persons, the loss of which causes us to cease to exist, leaving behind not a living animal, but a life-supported human body. Much brain damage can be sustained before a human being loses the ability to be self-conscious, though he may exhibit very different personality traits. It is likely, therefore, for a person in this state to be almost completely brain-dead, and therefore arguably, only still breathing etc. due to life-support. One must question, then, whether the brain-dead being is actually a human animal, or just a partially-activated corpse. There are cases where apparently brain-dead human beings have survived for a short time after life-support is removed, but there is no way of knowing whether what appears to be no brain activity is the same as there being no awareness. Furthermore, the fact that the human being can survive a short time after life-support is removed, suggests that the brain is still functioning enough for the vital organs to sustain life temporarily. As it is, we will probably never know.

Scholastic Animalism: A Personalist and Animalist Approach

All this gives us reason to think that a personalist-animalist combined account of the nature of human beings and their persistence conditions might be the best way forward. In the first instance, the avoidance of a purely personalist ontology prevents the possibility that we human beings could ever cease to be human, while avoiding the troubling notion that a human being is more than one thing: a person and an animal. The nature of contemporary personalism, which is also anti-human personalism, is such that we cannot explain our humanity without appeal to biological factors, none of which are considered to be permanent or essential to us being persons, and thereby to our persistence *per se*. However, on any kind of human animalist account, we cannot cease to be human because our human animality defines us.

Secondly, the inclusion of self-consciousness, or at least the potential for self-consciousness, as a necessary property for our persistence, no matter how primitive, prevents a completely brain-dead human being having numerical identity with any one of us, assuming that it is possible to be completely brain-dead and be more than a life-supported activated corpse. Furthermore, it suggests that neither a biologically dead nor a completely brain-dead human being should be thought of as more than a human body, at best a part of one of us, where the human person, and therefore the human organism, has ceased to exist. The early term foetus

has at least the potential for self-consciousness, in that it will become a self-conscious being, but at the point of brain-death, the human being ceases to exist, and so what we might call an animated human body cannot be considered a human being. As it is, if it turns out that biological persistence is tied to psychological persistence, then Olson's account of human animality would be sufficient, and animalism too would allow that personhood is a permanent and essential property of human beings, as an accidental property of human animality.

Ontologically, therefore, it makes sense for human beings to be permanently and essentially both human persons and human animals, where it is implied that having, or potentially having, first-perspective is a necessary property of human beings. The more difficult and perhaps controversial issue concerns persistence. According to scholastic animalism, the ways in which I satisfy the criteria for being a human person are just the ways in which I satisfy the criteria of being a human animal. While it is true that we have both biological and psychological persistence conditions, this is in virtue of being both human persons and human animals simultaneously, such that remaining a biological organism of a particular kind is a necessary condition of human personhood, and having self-consciousness, rationality etc. is a necessary condition of human animality.

As a result of this, scholastic animalism does not fall prey to the kind of issues we discussed with regard to contemporary personalism and contemporary animalism. The former, given the neo-Lockean account of person persistence, cannot consider a person's humanity to be essential to him, unless there is something in his personhood that specifies his nature as human, which seems unlikely. The personalist, in general, by allowing that a person coming into existence after the human animal it comes to share a decomposition with, has the issue that a human being is not one thing but two. For the scholastic animalist, on the other hand, a human being's personhood is defined according to his human body, so there is only one being. As such, he cannot cease to be a human animal and remain a human person. He also cannot cease to be a human animal and go on surviving. Nonetheless, there is still a requirement for him to remain a human person in the usual sense. He cannot continue to exist as a brain-dead animal; he must have a mind, at least for Aquinas. Therefore, while having a mental life is not sufficient for persistence, it is necessary.

Coming-to-be and Ceasing-to-be: A Contemporary Stance on Thomism

Having now considered the benefits of the human personalist/human animalist account of personhood, we turn back to the Thomistic theory of embryogenesis and the afterlife, looking instead at how the problems discussed might be solved in a contemporary framework. A good theory of personhood should be able to answer these kinds of questions, especially relating to when personhood begins and in what circumstances it might be lost.

Background

As we have seen, the Thomistic account of human personhood is built upon the Aristotelian conception of hylomorphism, whereby each living thing is made alive by an incorporeal soul of a particular kind, appropriate to its complexity. For a human person, this life-principle is an intellective soul, infused at a particular point of foetal development, beginning the life of the person in question. At death, the soul departs, leaving behind a lifeless corpse, or else a living non-human animal. During life, the soul's powers are responsible for basic levels of sensation, in addition to intellectual capacities, possessed only by human beings. As such, no human being can exist without a mind, and the loss of mind is the loss of intellective soul. For Aquinas, a human being's continuing to live without a mind/intellective soul is simply impossible. Likewise, the embryo in the womb pre-infusion is not numerically identical to the human foetus after infusion; it ceases to exist, and the foetus comes in its place.

As discussed in the first chapter, Aquinas' account of human nature seems to have a number of unfortunate implications. There are two main ones. The first concerns the requirement for a person to actually possess at all times a mind. The second highlights the issue with explaining how the pre-infusion embryo and the post-infusion foetus can be numerically different beings when they appear to share all the same organs and cells. Clearly these are linked though, assuming that a minded being can never be numerically identical to a non-minded being. Let us look first then at the notion of mindedness and the intellectual nature, in order to decide what the requirements need to be for personhood, and therefore human animality.

The Essential Mind

Mind, for Aquinas, is essentially the faculty of soul called the intellect. Although incorrect to call it a part of the soul, the intellect's nature is such that it cannot exist separately. Nonetheless, because it relies on no organ to function, it can continue to cognise when the other faculties of soul are no longer able to continue in their own activities. For this reason, Aquinas holds that the intellect will continue to function after death, though it is not clear whose thoughts, beliefs etc. these are.

The bigger problem for human personhood, though, is with regard to the early term foetus. Despite being the foetus of a human being, and therefore a human foetus, without an intellective soul, and therefore a mind, such a being cannot be regarded as a human person/animal. But this is surely no different from the foetus problem affecting neo-Lockean accounts of personal persistence. There is a being existing before personhood that is not numerically identical to the future person, though they have not merged to become one being, and it hard to see how the former can have just ceased to exist.

As it happens, Aquinas' response to the foetus problem is to say that the embryo has ceased to exist. Hylomorphically, the 'thin' matter itself has taken on a new form, so the (non-form-including) matter of the embryo loses its (substantial) form, and acquires a new one, and thus must partly compose a different substance at the end of the process than it does at the beginning. The process of generation and corruption,

though, happens more than once, and so there are several new substances coming into and going out of existence during pregnancy, each slightly more sophisticated than the last. Nonetheless, this is a very difficult position to endorse. The idea that a being has ceased to exist, when there is no obvious termination of its life, is not intuitive. What reason, then, do we have for thinking that the embryo has not become a foetus? It does not follow that an apparently internal soul must determine a substance's identity, and yet this is the nature ofhylomorphic substances. One might deny that the soul itself is the form of the body, but such a move surely undermines the whole theory.

To be in keeping with Thomistic Aristotelianism, then, one can only consider embryogenesis within the hylomorphic framework, whereby the soul is the form of the body. Nonetheless, there might be room for an interpretation that avoids the troubling notion of generation and corruption. It seems to be a consequence of the way Aquinas understands the different types of souls that the substance in the womb (non-rigid designator) is first a plant, then a simple animal, and finally a human being. This, though, does not appear to be essential either to scholastic animalism, or to hylomorphism. Furthermore, it is very hard to believe that any creature with the DNA of a human being, at least from the moment of implantation, could actually be a plant/non-human animal just because of the type of soul it is said to have. Of course, Aquinas could not have known about DNA, but had he done, it is likely that he would have incorporated such knowledge into his theory, given his commitment to the scientific principles of the day. Nonetheless, DNA would still not be enough to secure humanity, considering its parallels with the *virtus formativa*, existing in the sperm from conception, and driving the pregnancy. It is not enough for something to have human DNA for it to be a human; it must also have its own life as a living organism, requiring nutrition and so on. This, then, is surely reason to think that there is more to being a particular substance than type of soul, and therefore capacities. How, therefore, can we call the primitive-streak-stage embryo a plant? It would be better, though not perfect, to call it a human being with the capacities of a plant. In order for this to be the case, though, the substance in the womb (non-rigid designator) cannot have a different type of soul at different times. Instead, it must have the same type of soul (a human soul), from the moment it can be said to have a soul at all. Each soul would be replaced with another of the same type, but with a greater number of powers, in relation to the stage of the foetus. This though would result in problems about identity, given that a new soul is a new form, which causes a new being to come into existence instead. I would argue that it is better, though, to say that the soul infused at implantation is the same soul possessed by the person for the rest of his life, where more of its powers are utilised as it develops. Otherwise, we have to wonder what it is that makes the creature in the womb (non-rigid designator) a human from implantation, and we still have an issue with each of us coming into existence only as an almost fully-formed foetus, which is clearly too late.

The Potential Mind

Perhaps, then, the answer lies in the concept of potentiality. Aquinas states in his discussion on embryogenesis that the development of the embryo is determined by the *virtus formativa*. While we now know the process is more complex than this, this can be taken as evidence that Aquinas had some awareness

of how potentiality can be found within a being, and therefore that such an idea is not outside the scope of his theory. This, then, matches what science tells us about the development of the zygote following fertilisation. As the cells divide pre-implantation, the zygote, now known as a blastocyst, contains not only the cells that will form the baby, but the cells forming the placenta, amniotic sac etc. Furthermore, these cells are currently identical, so one cannot even identify what will become the embryo. It is hard, therefore, to say there is only one ontological being present, and even harder to say there is actually a human being there. However, once mitosis is complete, the role of each group of cells is determined, and there is no chance of twinning. There now exists a distinguishable embryo, a single ontological being. Prior to this, though, the most we can be sure of is that the blastocyst has the potential to be at least one human being. Scientifically and philosophically, therefore, this is the earliest each of us could realistically be said to exist.

Nonetheless, this is far too early for the kind of soul infusion that Aquinas embraces. Instead, he requires that the embryo, or even the foetus, has the capacity to use a mind before it can have one. Not only must it have a brain, then, but a reasonably developed one. But is this really necessary? Why can it not be enough for a creature to be potentially minded in order to be a person? I do not see that Aquinas adequately answers this question, and neither does there seem to be a problem with potential, rather than actual, 'true' rationality. At one level, a being is potentially rational if it can engage its rational capacities at will. On another level, it can be said to be potentially rational if it is the kind of being that will naturally develop this capacity. This latter potentiality is sometimes known as second-order potentiality and could be said to apply to the embryo in the womb post-implantation. It can be called a human being because it now has a second-order potentiality for true rationality, as required for being a human person, and therefore a human being, under the Thomistic-Boethian definition. As far as infusion goes, therefore, God could have infused the human soul at this point, such that the substance in the womb (non-rigid designator) only ever has the one soul. As a result, from infusion to end of life, there is only one living being, as Aquinas already stated. The difference is that infusion occurs much earlier under this interpretation. This only works if God actively infuses the soul at the moment of implantation, so that there is no risk that another animal comes from what Olson calls the 'human-being-dough', resulting in two animals, and therefore a too-many-animals problem. However, in Aquinas' original account, it is assumed that God will infuse the human soul at the correct time, and for a God who is said to knit each one of us together in our mother's wombs (Psalm 139), this does not seem to be a step too far. In the case of twins, then, God simply infuses two souls, and the 'human-being-dough' results in two human embryos.

But does this work for the mind/intellect? Until a human being is actually minded, probably at some point in the second trimester, it only potentially has a mind. However, because the intellect is the only faculty of soul that functions apart from any body, it is hard to see how it could be dependent upon the development of the brain. If say, the mind were in some way an emergent property of the brain, a common theory among philosophers of mind, then it could not exist apart from the brain, and would be dependent on the whole human being. This seems no problem during the person's life, but after death, Aquinas believes the soul is

able to go on functioning without the person, and it is questionable whether the soul's change in mode of existence would be sufficient for the intellect to no longer depend on the brain but only on the rest of the soul. Such is also a worry for the concept of the intellective soul generally, for received substantial forms are not usually able to exist and function apart from the matter they inform, in this case the human body.

Even so, this sounds like the most viable option. If we are required to believe that the first living organism in the womb is numerically identical to the baby it seems to become, and we do not wish to abandon hylomorphism of soul and body, then we must also hold that the soul of the first living organism is the same soul as possessed by the new-born baby. This soul initially has a number of potential capacities yet to be activated, but once the embryo/foetus reaches a particular stage of development, it becomes able to utilise them. The last capacity to be actualised is that of mind, and this seems to be down to the required complexity of the brain, in the same way that the capacity of sight depends on the sophistication of the eye. Not only does this seem to fit with Aquinas' key commitments, but it also reflects what science teaches⁹⁸ about the development of the baby in the womb. Right from the moment of conception, there are many kinds of potentialities affecting the cells and chemicals in and around the zygote. This is also the nature of DNA, such that many of the baby's properties are already predetermined.

What, though, does potentially having a mind mean for those persons whose mental capacity has in some way become inhibited? Given the requirement for the person to actually possess a mind, Aquinas allows that a human being may cease to exist before the end of its life, in such a way that what is left behind now has an animal-like existence. This is the ceasing-to-be of human persons. If, however, the mind need only be had potentially and not actually, we might allow the person to persist through certain types of brain damage, provided the brainstem is still intact. If not, it is likely that the person only has a biological life on account of life-support, and has arguably already ceased to exist, leaving behind a partially-animated corpse.

The Boethian-Thomistic Definition Revisited

This different understanding of what it means to potentially have a mind requires a reinterpretation of the Boethian-Thomistic definition of person. Two options seem to be open to us, depending on what is meant by 'subsisting in an intellectual nature'. The first considers the alternative contemporary animalist conception of personhood as being a property belonging to all members of a particular species of animal, such that one does not have to actually possess it (in the sense of having a mind actually) in order to be called 'human being' and 'human person'. For example, a baby born with an underdeveloped brain, such that he may not yet, if ever, be able to cognise in the usual way, is still a person because he belongs to the species whose members subsist in an intellectual nature, that is, potentially or actually have a mind. Although this may not be enough for the scholastic animalist, it does seem to be a reasonable position to hold. Human beings may

⁹⁸ Aquinas' notion of the separated soul might be difficult to reconcile with what science teaches about human beings, but it may be questioned whether science would have anything to say about life after death, when such an event cannot be studied with the scientific method.

typically have four limbs, but one born without any, or even with extra, is still a human being. Furthermore, biologically-speaking, two creatures of the same species cannot produce offspring of a different species. Whatever becomes of the baby as it develops, it was still formed from a human ovum and a human sperm, and so must be human.

Nonetheless, in the case of human beings, this may not be the only reason for a human person's human personhood. The biological may not even be the only reason for any creature's belonging to the species it does. As far as viviparous creatures go anyway, biology can only explain why the individual cells are alive up to implantation. It cannot answer how and when these cells become part of an individual living being, or what Norman Ford calls an 'ontological individual' (1989, p. 212). This is defined as follows: "a single concrete entity that exists as a distinct being and is not an aggregation of smaller things, nor merely a part of a greater whole; hence its unity is said to be intrinsic". There is reason to think, therefore, that such a question may just as much be one for philosophy as biology. Biology tells us that the zygote is human, but it is a question of metaphysics whether it is yet a human being. For Ford, then, the zygote is an ontological individual, though it is certainly debatable whether it is really an aggregation of smaller things, but not a human being. The embryo will grow up to be an adult human being, but the zygote must divide, increasing in complexity, and only then will part of it go on to create the actual human embryo.

Ford also sees the ovum and sperm in the same light, as ontological individuals, but this is contentious. Neither the ovum nor the sperm are themselves organisms, given that they lack the capacity for any kind of development, do not seek nutrition through differentiated parts, and their short functional duration demonstrates that their 'life' is no different from any other living cell existing as part of an organism (Johnson, 1995, p. 752). It is assumed that cells themselves cannot be ontological individuals, even as parts of organs. It seems then that they have a different kind of existence from even the zygote. Nonetheless, clearly something could be an ontological individual without being an organism. Some might be inanimate objects, but it also seems possible for there to be something like an organism, but only ontologically separable and not biologically. This seems to be the position of the zygote. It can be created in vitro and left to develop in the right conditions for a few days, and then implanted into the uterus. This is the equivalent of the zygote's journey from the fallopian tube, as blastocyst, morula etc., until it implants at the embryonic stage. If the in vitro blastocyst is not implanted by around the sixth day, it must be frozen, or it will die. However, research shows that the later the blastocyst is implanted, the more risk there is of miscarriage through failure to embed, while the earlier it is implanted, the less likely it is to survive.

This, then, gives us a good reason to think of the pre-embryo as an ontological individual, but not as an organism. The nature of an organism is that it cannot sustain itself without in-taking external nutrients. Even the simplest organisms have to feed. The zygote, on the other hand, has been found to only require the nutrients from the ovum and the sperm up until the embryonic stage at implantation into the uterine lining. From this point, it takes in nutrients directly from the wall of the uterus until the development of the placenta

and umbilical cord. It is not true, therefore, that the pre-implantation zygote seeks nutrition through differentiated parts. Again, this is based on relatively new research, not available at the time Ford and Johnson were writing, but it does seem to be evidence for what Johnson calls 'delayed hominization'. It is likely that the requirement for the human organism to begin at conception, as denied by Aquinas, is a matter of ethics just as much as philosophy. Nevertheless, as we have seen, there is no need for abortion to involve the killing of an actual human being for it to be morally reprehensible. The zygote may not be an actual human organism, but it is the 'dough' from which a human organism will naturally come to exist.

Returning to the definition, therefore, we have reason to think that something more than cell division and implantation causes individual life to come to a previously only-potentially-living being. For Aquinas, this is the soul, the first principle of life. For many, the notion of a soul is not very scientific, but it nonetheless plays a useful explanatory role. At the point of implantation, and thus the supposed beginning of the living human organism, the cells of the embryo have their roles determined. It is too late for further division, as in the case of twinning, and soon the amniotic sac will form, along with the early parts of embryonic development. It therefore seems plausible that there are powers existing potentially in the embryo, which will reach activation once the embryo reaches the appropriate change of foetal development. In the case of the intellectual power, one must assume that this exists potentially in the embryo as a power of the immaterial soul. For non-human animals, if we want to think of their souls being infused in a sense too, which would be consistent with the use of 'spirit' or 'breath' for how animals are sometimes described in the Bible, then they would have souls without the intellectual power, and for Aquinas, without the ability to subsist independent from the composite body.

Perhaps this, then, is the intellective nature in which the living human person subsists. Despite the embryo being little more than a clump of very specific cells, its nature is very much human. It has a full set of human DNA and it will now develop into an adult human being. Furthermore, because all human animals are human persons, for the scholastic animalist, and all human persons have intellective natures, for the Thomist, it must be true that a human nature is an intellective nature. It seems hard to doubt, therefore, that the living human embryo fits the Boethian-Thomistic definition of 'person' under this revised interpretation.

Likewise, following the loss of rational faculties due to brain damage, the human being remains a person in accordance with his participation in the same human life. It might be debated whether he really potentially has a mind, but usually brain scans will show a complete lack of activity in the brainstem, resulting in eventual medical death, in these cases. This might suggest that the human being can survive for a short time without his soul, given that he is actually brain-dead, but is it necessary that the process of soul-disembodiment be any more instant than death itself? We know already that it can take up to three days for all the cells in a human body to completely die. Perhaps, we could compare the process of the soul leaving the body to the electricity leaving all the components of, say, a computer. The process may be considerably slower, but unplugging a device does not cause it to lose all power instantly, although it will immediately

cease to function. Likewise, death, in terms of the human being completely losing awareness, may happen instantly, but the soul may not leave the body ‘all in one go’, just as it may not be infused in an instant either. It seems reasonable to attribute any leftover brain activity, not necessarily in the brainstem, to the presence of a mind, given that patients often awaken even from deep comas with some memory of being aware during this time. True brain-death, resulting in complete life-support, may reasonably be termed death, but this only occurs when all activity has ceased, as is not the case with comatose patients, or even those in a PVS, unless there is evidence of a decline in brain activity, in which case one might view the person in question as dying.

The Separated Mind: The Afterlife

Thus far, we have discussed the contemporary issues surrounding the concept of human personhood from implantation to death, but it remains for us to discuss Aquinas’ views on the afterlife in the light of these considerations. How, then, might a scholastic animalist, sympathetic to the Thomistic interpretation – either from Aquinas’ writings himself, or the possible interpretations we have here discussed – attempt to reconcile these thoughts about the potential mind and the role of the body with what has been said previously about life after death?

For Aquinas, the soul leaves the body at the point of death, and goes on to be with God, awaiting bodily resurrection on the Last Day. It does not, though, cease to function in the intermediate stage, but takes on a different mode of existence, whereby the intellect continues its role in a similar though less perfect way from the angels. It is at least partly for this reason that the intellect is said not to be the act of any body, though it has more than been implied that the intellect can only function in a body with a brain of sufficient complexity. Aquinas, himself, supports this by his claim that the human soul cannot be infused until the foetus is equipped to receive it. This we have debated, but it does seem to suggest that the faculty of reason is an emergent property of the brain. It only exists potentially as a faculty of the soul, but without the brain, it would never be actualised.

This may be helpful when considering the early-term embryo, but now we have a problem. The body cannot play any role in the existence or function of the intellect after death, and before final resurrection. All that remains before bodily resurrection is the soul, not the person, but a part of him. This was the first issue: if the mind continues to function, but the person is not currently in existence, whose thoughts are they? If the person’s, then it seems one can continue without one’s body, and the body is no longer necessary. If they are the thoughts of another person, what becomes of that person when the first person is resurrected? Perhaps, as some Christians believe, the person continues to exist but in a state of sleep, as is implied by St Paul in several of his epistles. There may then be some activity going on, but no-one except God is aware of it. It is unlikely that Aquinas would have been content with such an answer.

Instead, he offers some idea as to what is happening in his commentary to the Apostles’ Creed (particularly articles five and nine), where he appears to contradict himself that persons are ontologically body and soul,

by saying that they continue to exist after death as disembodied souls until the Final Judgement. We also find a reference to this idea in Revelation 6:9-11, where the souls of those who had been slain cry out in heaven. This too is taken to mean that the persons themselves are to be identified with their souls. So, not only are souls potentially conscious, independent of their bodies, but persons, though they are body-soul composites, can exist (at least for a time) as souls. How, though, can these two opposite views be reconciled?

In a recent paper, Christopher Conn offers an explanation as to how Aquinas can consistently affirm both that I am not my soul, and that I can exist for a time as a soul (2011, p. 324). Having established that Aquinas states both ideas in various places in his writings, he discusses the nature of the soul before and after death. It is important to note that despite these apparently contradictory positions, the soul is still understood to be essentially the soul of a particular human being – both during earthly life and after, though officially ‘unowned’ in the latter – and therefore essentially united to a particular human body (p. 328). For this reason, a soul existing apart from a body has a different manner of existence from one joined to a body. This manner of existing is both incomplete and imperfect, as we have seen. However, this does not necessarily mean that it cannot exist in this form. Conn writes:

Though [Aquinas] denies that one’s soul is ontologically dependent upon its union with one’s body, he nevertheless insists that it is functionally and teleologically dependent upon such a union (ibid).

This is very much the idea that was demonstrated by Aquinas in the relevant passage of the *ST*. Certain faculties of soul cannot operate apart from the body, or at least not in the way they previously did. The intellect is said to function much like an angel, but less perfectly. It seems that one could argue against the five senses being accessible to the soul during its separation, and yet given that angels (though purely immaterial beings) must also see and hear too, it seems more reasonable to assume that our mode of sight and hearing will change with the soul’s mode of existence. Furthermore, if a person is not identical to his soul, but to a composite of soul and body, then, teleologically, this separation must be temporary. Nonetheless, the dependency is not said to be ontological, and so the soul can (for a time) exist apart from the body.

What, though, does this say for the person? Previously, we argued that persons cease to exist when they die, and appear again at the resurrection. This was an uncomfortable conclusion, however, given that the intellect continues to function apart from the person whose intellect it is. Under Conn’s interpretation, though, it now seems as though the person *does not* cease to exist when he dies. Instead, he exists (for a time) as a soul (p. 334). Aquinas writes:

[...] a thing seems to be chiefly what is principle in it. [...] In this way sometimes what is principle in man is said to be man; sometimes, indeed, the intellectual part which, in accordance with truth, is called the ‘inward’ man; and sometimes the sensitive part with the body is called man [...] (ST I, 75.4 ad. 1).

This, now, puts us at risk of platonic dualism, as Aquinas strongly contends, and many with him. Let us look at why this might be, before considering another possible explanation for these passages.

In question 75 of the *ST*, Aquinas gives reference to St Paul's distinction between the inner (or inward) and outer (or outward) man. This is typically understood as the difference between the soul and the body, or the intellective and the sensitive parts. In his second letter to the church in Corinth, St Paul describes being at home with the Lord as being apart from the body, and identifying us with the inner man, while our bodies function as "earthly tents" (5:10). Like Aquinas, though, I do not see St Paul's comments about the inner man as being a defence of or actually implying substance dualism. Alternatively, it seems to just be a different way of speaking about the same idea. We are not our souls, but our souls are more central to who we are than our bodies. We also find this in Conn: "Because I am a soul/body *composite* I am not presently identical with my soul. And because I am not presently identical with my soul I shall never be identical with my soul" (p. 335, emphasis mine). As a result, one can only exist *as* his soul provided his soul is essential to his existence in a way that his body is not. The human being as a composite substance will never exist without a body, but it does not follow from this that the human being alone could never exist without a body. The key idea here is this notion of being a *composite*. While on earth, a person is a composite of body and soul, but after he dies, he becomes composed fully of that which he was previously only partly composed: his soul. This still does not make him identical with his soul though, for he has properties his soul does not. It might be debated what these are – personally, I believe that my DNA is essential to me – but the main point is simply that a person essentially has a soul, and a soul does not. As a person, I hold onto the properties of person, whether my soul possesses them or not, such that I am able to possess them actually after resurrection.

It seems that we may now have fallen prey to the possibility of non-human existence, as was objected to in the case of personalist theories of personhood. If we can exist without bodies, what makes us human? Conn offers one thought, I another. Firstly, according to Conn, it is still essential for us to be partly composed of a human body, for our existence as a soul is incomplete and inferior. This does not mean that we as souls are incomplete and inferior, but that our manner of existence is, just as the manner of existence of the soul in general will be vastly different from its existence as the form of the body in the composite. Aquinas describes the death of a human being as corruption, whereby a composed substance ceases to exist. Perhaps, then, to put it another way, the biological death of the human being results in the corruption of the composed substance, which goes out of existence, and the person, existing as a separated soul, continues to exist in this state for a time. This explains why death, which will be destroyed in the end times, prevents us having complete existence as beings composed of body and soul until the last day. Secondly, and most obviously, I would argue that all souls are different, in accordance with the person to whom they will belong. Not only are human souls different from animal souls, therefore, but each human soul is different from the next. As

such, each person is not only essentially human because he is composed of a human soul, but essentially *this* human because he is composed of *this* human soul, whether partly or totally.

The idea of existence as something less than one essentially is may be more clearly explained through analogy. It might be said that caterpillars are potentially butterflies, just as human embryos are potentially babies. Between the stages of caterpillar and butterfly though is the pupa, where the potential butterfly has a reduced existence as a kind of immobile being, while undergoing rapid change in each part of itself within the chrysalis. Some of the usual life processes are paused during this time, such that the potential butterfly is entirely focused on completing metamorphosis. For example, it does not eat at this time, but uses the energy it has gained during the caterpillar stage. Nonetheless, whatever the potential butterfly essentially is, that thing must be a living organism, participating in all the usual life processes. Given that the caterpillar is the infant butterfly, we might very well say that, just as a baby is essentially a human being (under the definition of adult human being), the caterpillar is essentially a member of the species of butterfly it will become.

As a result, the butterfly's existence as a pupa in a chrysalis might be compared to a human person's existence as a soul in heaven. Neither exists fully as the kind of being it is, but nonetheless has some kind of life, with different requirements from those it previously had, and will have. Metaphysically, therefore, existence as less than one actually is, is not outside the realms of possibility. The problem is whether such an idea can be seen to fit with those things Aquinas says about human beings. Conn sees this as perfectly consistent. The relationship between soul and body seems to define the soul as a subsistent substantial form, but given that it can exist separately, it cannot be true that such a union is essential for the soul, despite Aquinas seeming to say that it is an essential feature of each soul that it be united to a particular human body. Perhaps, then, neither is it essential for the human being, even if it is preferable for the both soul to be united to a body, and the human being to have a body to have complete existence.

Most importantly, though, if there is inconsistency, or at worst a contradiction, with holding both that human beings are essentially composed of body and soul, and that they can exist as just souls for a time, there must be a similar problem with Aquinas' statements that it is an essential feature of a soul to be united to a human body, and it is possible for a soul to exist for a time apart from such a body. In both cases, it seems that the soul and the human being both now have a different mode of existence, and that Aquinas' use of 'essential' really means something like 'essential while in this state'. For human beings, then, we might say that they are essentially composed of body and soul *at all times that human beings are composite substances*. Likewise, for the soul, it is an essential feature of a soul to be united to a human body *at all times that there is a human body to inform*. Granted, this seems like a stretch for the usual sense of 'essentially', but if we do not at least make the second move, then we have to accept that Aquinas has contradicted himself. Furthermore, once we have entertained the possibility that the soul's union with the body is only essential to it when it can be informing the body, there is no reason we should not also allow that human beings are essentially composed of body and soul when human beings are composite substances. It certainly seems

difficult to argue with the usual interpretation of Scripture, that in the interim period between death and resurrection, each person, not just his soul, still exists, but we also find this in some of Aquinas' commentaries on the Apostles' Creed. With regard to Christ, he states that "before the coming of Christ all men, even the holy fathers after their death, descended into the underworld"⁹⁹. Here, it is those who had already died who had continued existence, not merely their souls. Furthermore, concerning the words "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church" from the ninth article, Aquinas comments that this *assembly of the faithful* exists on earth, in purgatory, and in heaven. Sometimes he describes those in purgatory and heaven as souls, but this just seems to further support the idea that the persons themselves exist *as souls*, for, as Conn puts it, it makes little or no sense to say that one's soul is a member of an assembly (p. 331). Therefore, I suggest that each human being continuing to exist as a soul between death and resurrection is both consistent with what Aquinas does say, and better explains how it is that the soul continues to function intellectually in a separated state.

The Separated Mind: Pre-Death

In chapter two, we considered the thought experiment of the disembodied mind, whereby a person is reduced to the thinking part of his brain, perhaps the cerebrum, and the rest of him is destroyed. This is a known problem for all kinds of animalism, assuming it is actually conceivable – as was contested previously – given that a cerebrum cannot be called an animal, and the thoughts of a cerebrum can only really belong to the person whose cerebrum it is. Olson's response was to appeal to further problems with the psychological approach and stating that it cannot account for the life of non-human organisms. This, though, did not directly refute the argument. Instead, it was shown that despite the lack of an appropriate answer, the biological approach still has more appeal than the psychological. Finally, it was discussed whether the possibility of a disembodied mind really makes sense unless the mind is wholly immaterial, such that it participates in a different kind of life from biological organisms.

Nonetheless, according to Parfit, even such implausible thought experiments can be of use as long as they promote some kind of reaction in us. So, what can we learn from this? Firstly, whether metaphysically possible or not, most of us can conceive of a disembodied mind in this way. Furthermore, when forced to think about it as a whole process, it is very hard to completely dismiss it as fiction. A good example of this is the process of 'unwinding' described in Neal Shusterman's dystopian novel *Unwind*. The premise is simple. Abortion is forbidden in this future society, but children between the ages of thirteen and eighteen may be unwound, and their body parts given as transplants. The process is said to be painless, but obviously very alarming. Essentially the 'unwinds' are gradually dissected while fully conscious, but locally anaesthetised. Shusterman assumes that they will remain aware of the process until the very last part of the brain is separated, such that the surgeons will talk to the 'unwind' until he can no longer hear. The act of being unwound though, is not considered by society as a whole to be a death sentence, for the parts of the person will live on in others' bodies, though clearly it is. At the end of the novel, the reader is taken through the full

⁹⁹ *The Catechetical Instructions of St. Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Collins, J. (1939), cited in Conn (2011)

process according to a character experiencing it, and though he might very well ask some medical questions about whether the ‘unwind’ would really be alive once his heart and lungs are removed, say at the point of being reduced to upper torso and head, the description nevertheless makes it seem at least conceptually plausible. I do not deny that *Unwind* may be rife with scientific, medical and philosophical difficulties, and that assumptions about personhood and life are made that cannot be made, but neither – and this is what makes the idea so disturbing – is it obviously complete fiction. We have surely all wondered how much of oneself a person can lose before he dies/ceases to exist. Shusterman suggests this can go almost the whole way.

Returning to the original disembodied mind thought experiment, then, we would have to imagine that the unwind process is stopped at the point when there is just enough of the ‘person’ to have thoughts and experiences. This gives us the disembodied mind. As has been said, for Shusterman, the assumption is made that this disembodied mind is the person, just in a heavily reduced form, about to lose consciousness forever. The ‘unwind’ still just about knows that he is himself. The contemporary animalist, who cannot allow that a person exists as something other than an animal, is not comfortable with this conclusion on a metaphysical level.

Scholastic animalism, on the other hand, seems to be able to treat the unwind situation rather like the separated soul at death. The important point is that just because one can be reduced to his mind/soul, does not mean he is identical with his mind/soul. As such, while the soul is said to be whole in whole and whole in every part, we can imagine it being reduced to the scope of the body as the body decreases. Eventually, there is just some of the brain there, and though the intellect does not act through any organ, it will now reside in the bits of brain. With these concepts in mind, we can now say the person has been reduced to part of the brain, still activated by the soul. But the person is not the part of the brain activated by the soul; he is currently an incomplete animal/person, for though his identity might be said to depend on having the same soul, there is a sense in which he is not now a complete animal/person. To be a complete animal/person might either be to exist as a person, that is without being a part of a person, but perhaps lacking some of the parts a person usually has, or else existing as a person, and being complete in that he has all the parts that persons are supposed to have. If we allow existence as a complete person in the first sense, we can account for the kind of mutilation described in the disembodied mind situation, but if only in the second, then, existence as a disembodied mind would not count as existence of a complete person. In order to allow the metaphysical possibility of disembodied mind, where the person whose mind it is, is the subject of the mind’s thoughts, it seems we would have to deny that it is necessary to have completeness in the second sense for a person to continue to exist. This move, though, arguably risks giving up Aquinas’ hylomorphic account of the essence of human beings. So, it seems we must either allow that the remaining parts of the brain are enough to constitute a complete human body, and therefore a human being, albeit with reduced sensory functions – a kind of restricted biological life, or we allow a kind of partial survival, whereby the person’s biological life has ended, but his mental life sustains his existence in a kind of mock-afterlife

situation. In both cases, though, the soul must itself be sufficient for the continuation of life of one kind or another.

The approach is not problem-free, but it does support that idea that, as Conn puts it, “our souls have a much deeper hold on who we are than our bodies” (p. 335). The response the scholastic animalist would perhaps want to give to the disembodied mind problem is therefore a fourth option. That which exists as a disembodied mind is the original person whose brain it was. He is still a human person, and he is still a human animal, but he currently exists as a soul/mind. We have, though, severed the link between being an animal and having a biological life. Nonetheless, in *DEE*, Aquinas, referencing Aristotle, states that Socrates, and by extension all human beings, is/are nothing more than animality and rationality, which are his quiddity (24). If animality, then, belongs to the human being, who is still identical to an animal while existing as a soul, given that he is essentially an animal, then he cannot lose his animality at any time. Further, if having a biological life belongs to an animal essentially, this too will still belong to the human being in his reduced state. It might seem hard to accept that a bit of a brain could still have a biological life, but unless the human being does not survive being reduced to a disembodied mind, one has to assume that his biological life continues. Moreover, it might be difficult, as states Olson, to see how a separate cerebral cortex say could really be an animal, but firstly, the scholastic animalist will not see this as any more implausible than saying the separated cerebral cortex is really a human being/human person, and secondly, given that the word ‘animal’ is etymologically tied to soul, *anima*, in that ‘animal’ really means ‘having breath’ or ‘having a soul’, while the soul lives on, it seems natural to suggest that what possesses the soul, namely the animal, does too.

Out of respect to Aquinas, however, I feel I should point out that this is an extrapolation from his thoughts about the afterlife to a similar kind of situation on the part of myself. Although there is metaphysical sense here, I do not see this as being at all plausible to Aquinas, who most likely would deny that a person could remain alive without a heart, and would surely die before he could be reduced to a disembodied existence. And for the reasons I highlighted in chapter two, I am inclined to agree. Nonetheless, as a merely conceptual reality – as for reasons I have highlighted, I do not think it could actually happen – existing as a mind or soul, although each of us is actually identical to a whole human being, body and soul, may be the most plausible way of looking at the puzzle of the disembodied mind, without giving up the principles of human animalism, and by extension, scholastic animalism.

Final Issues

Hylomorphism of Body and Soul

Scholastic animalism, as a theory of human nature, has many benefits over its rivals, but as a metaphysics, there are still potential problems. The main issue is that of the relationship between the mind (as consciousness) and the body. For Aquinas, this is a hylomorphic relation between soul and body, as form and

matter. However, hylomorphism is not generally any more popular than forms of dualism. This leaves us with two final questions: 1) can hylomorphism of soul and body be defended, and 2) if not, can scholastic animalism be endorsed without some kind of hylomorphism? In the first instance, one has to consider how hylomorphism about soul and body should be understood: reductively, dualistically or explanatorily.

It has often been said, most notably by Robert Pasnau, that hylomorphism in general should be understood to be an explanatory tool to explain actuality and potentiality of first substances. While this may be a reasonable interpretation for composed substances in general, it will not be sufficient for body and soul. Though they are actually one, that is, *unum simpliciter*, soul has the potential of existing apart from body, and so they cannot only be conceptually distinct, which sounds like a contradiction. On the other hand, we go too far if we ascribe to what is sometimes called hylomorphic dualism. There is actually (as is required for being *unum simpliciter*) one thing, and not two, at least, when there is a composed substance. Form is not one type of stuff and matter another, but one thing exists – the substance – and for forms and accidents to exist is just for the substance to exist in such and such a way. Hylomorphism, therefore, is better understood as not only explanatory but also reductive, in that what there actually is, is a substance. Pasnau explains this as follows:

Aquinas's hylomorphism is reductive in the sense that, loosely speaking, the matter of a substance is nothing over and above its form. In saying this, I don't mean merely that for Aquinas matter and form make one thing [...] I mean something further, something that might be articulated more precisely by saying that matter has no causal powers not possessed by form. [...] So, while I do not mean to deny that it is important to distinguish between form and matter [...] I do mean to reject the idea that form and matter are separate constituents making separate causal contributions to the composite substance (ibid, p. 133).

We also see this in Aquinas' commentary on the Physics:

[...] although form is not separated from matter in reality [secundum rem] nevertheless it differs from it in reason [ratione]. For just as bronze and shape, although one in subject, differ in reason, so do matter and form (II.2.151).

In the case of persons, then, body united to soul is no different from body actually existing. As such, hylomorphism is reductive in the direction of form (soul): "Substances are bundles of actuality, bundled together in virtue of being unified around a single substantial form" (Pasnau, 2002, p. 135). But what does this mean for the soul, given its separable nature? The important point is that, just as Aristotle's account of soul forces us to rethink the soul in a non-Cartesian context, Aquinas' theory of forms and actuality, is a total divorce from the ancients' theory of matter as the ultimate reality. Instead, it is the other way around; form gives existence to matter. This also seems to be in line with modern physics, which sees matter as ultimately a composite of different types of subatomic particles, such that matter only exists because the subatomic

particles do; they give existence to matter according to their configuration. As far as soul goes, therefore, there is no conceptual difficulty with the idea of form existing independent of matter. Furthermore, the soul, as the form of the body, must have within it actualities of many kinds. Nonetheless, it is not responsible for all bodily actuality. As Pasnau puts it, “my soul is less than the sum of my actuality” (p. 140). Soul gives life to a human person, but human persons cannot be reduced to soul because some actuality belongs to the body as matter actualised.

There is no denying that Aquinas’ theory of substance as starting with form is highly complex. I am not sure this necessarily counts against it though. Firstly, the complexity does not affect the coherence, which I agree with Pasnau that Aquinas achieves in most places despite the expected difficulties concerning any account of human beings as persons and animals according to seemingly different types of criteria. The notion of the mind, as somehow separable from the body, understandably requires a theory of thought and consciousness with non-bodily features, even for the materialist. Furthermore, it is likely that such complexity is required to solve the mind-body problem. In Aquinas’ metaphysics, these problems do not even feature. It is not really the case that there is this immaterial thing called form and a material thing called matter, as would feature in a kind of dualistic metaphysics of substance, because there is no fundamental divide between the material and the immaterial, but only between types of actualities, for which the human soul, for example, can contain more than one, as in the case of powers. Instead, the form-matter distinction is a way of understanding different kinds of actuality, of which there are many. Such a metaphysics seems highly innovative and not easily refuted.

Any incoherence, then, seems to be at the level of soul as separable from the body. Pasnau suggests, quoting Aquinas, that this is because we are used to thinking of bodies as the ultimate reality, when instead “form gives existence to matter, and so it is impossible for matter to exist without some form” (*DEE* 24). It is not, though, impossible for a form to exist without matter because form is not dependent on matter. The sense in which the human being is a composite of soul and body, then, is that it is a composite of ‘being alive’ and matter of a certain kind (human body). The human body cannot exist without being alive, so the two are inseparable. We might understand this with an analogy. Consider an appliance, perhaps a toaster. It is not strictly a substance for Aquinas, as with a statue, but it is generally understood to be one thing. When the appliance is not plugged in, it is only really homonymously called a toaster, but it is not functioning as a toaster, just a lump of metal and plastic. However, when the toaster is plugged in, electricity causes it to actually be a toaster. As soon as it is turned off though, the electricity leaves the components of the toaster, and exists in an almost potential form until something else is plugged into the socket. A working toaster, though, is not two things: a toaster and electricity. Likewise, a soul and a body are not two things. The soul powers the body, like the electricity powers the toaster, but it will still exist separately when the toaster or body is ‘turned off’. This is not a perfect analogy of course, but it supports the idea that what makes a substance actual is not strictly a part of that substance. When the human being dies, therefore, the soul takes on a different mode of existence, and a different mode of actuality, in such a way that the soul becoming a

substance in its own right, in the interim period between death and resurrection, does not seem to be a problem for Aquinas.

Dualism of Body and Soul

Nonetheless, I wish to argue that despite its benefits, hylomorphism is not required for scholastic animalism to be comprehensible and convincing, as a theory of human nature. The idea of human persons as soul/mind and body is a popular one among Christian philosophers, and the majority of such would claim to be dualists in some respect. Conceptually, then, there seems to be no issue with us being both essentially human animals and human persons, while somehow being composed of a separable, immaterial mind/soul, and a material body. As is common with dualist theories, there may be some unanswerable questions about the relationship between soul and body (the interaction problem), as well as some issues about how a human person can be essentially one if composed of two substances. If, on the other hand, one were of the belief that we as human animals consist of soul and body, but we as human persons are just souls/mind, then one could not be a scholastic animalist. Descartes would be one example. The mark of scholastic animalism is that it is inconceivable that human persons and human animals could have different persistence conditions. One cannot be a scholastic animalist, therefore, and believe that a person is identical to his soul.

However, a dualism of parts or properties could give the right result. It might remain difficult to explain how soul and body are related in this sense, but it is possible that a person could still be one substance, as is necessary for scholastic animalism. One would simply need to make a case for both parts/properties of human persons being essential to persistence. Therefore, if the case for dualism could be made, there is no reason why one could not be a scholastic animalist with a dualistic metaphysics.

Total Materialism

Finally, then, we must discuss scholastic animalism in the light of materialism. Many of the metaphysicians we have considered would profess themselves materialists, even about persons. Lynne Rudder Baker, for example, though she believes that persons can have properties that animals cannot, sees personhood as a material property. Likewise, Derek Parfit, who sees persistence according to psychological continuity, does not believe persistence can continue beyond the point where there is some of the original brain remaining. What seems to matter, therefore, is material composition. Such accounts of personal identity seem not to be compatible with scholastic animalism, simply because they allow the reduction of a human person to the mind/part of the brain, which is not an animal. However, one need not believe in an incorporeal soul in order to hold to both human personalism and human animalism either. If, for example, personhood could be viewed as an emergent property of the brain, as Shoemaker seems to see it, then it cannot be separated from the brain. Similarly, if the brain cannot be separated from the animal without death, then there will never be a living being that is a human animal and not a human person. Moreover, if one were to reduce mental properties to physical properties, and thereby the mind to the brain, as long as he required the brain's

persistence for the animal's persistence – and indeed it is hard to imagine a living animal without a brain – there is still no reason to suppose that all human persons are human animals and vice versa.

There may be other ways of looking at scholastic animalism through a materialist perspective, but our interests here lie with the metaphysical possibility of holding this view in conjunction with some version of scholastic animalism. There is no *prima facie* reason, therefore, why one cannot be a materialist scholastic animalist.

As we have seen, the cases where scholastic animalism can be said to be metaphysically impossible, are not in themselves very convincing, either philosophically or scientifically. There are also those that put pressure on the human animal-human person relation, most notably phase sortal approaches to animalism and purely psychological continuity accounts of persistence, but as I have demonstrated, they seem to leave big holes in the account of human nature, either by risking confliction with science by claiming we are not humans animals, or else being unable to account for the clear difference between persistence as a human person and personal persistence. No account of human nature is likely to be perfect, given our still limited understanding of exactly what we are – both limited to current scientific research, as well as the scope of the human mind to comprehend it – but scholastic animalism seems a very good place to start. Perhaps then, as Pasnau states, Aquinas' contributions are still underappreciated.

Conclusion

I. Scholasticism in Contemporary Thought

i. Contemporary Framework

The contemporary study of human nature and personal identity generally divides philosophers into two camps: those who think we are essentially persons, and those who think we are essentially animals. Though some thinkers may state that we are both persons and animals, this is not usually a claim of identity, but of constitution. Baker, for example, states that, in some sense, we human beings are both persons and animals, where the former is a relation of identity, and the latter of constitution. Additionally, Olson sees us as essentially animals, but allows that we may be persons. The key distinction concerns whether or not our personhood/animality is essential and permanent. Those in the first camp call themselves personalists, while those in the latter are the animalists.

In the case of animalism, it is usually held that if we are animals at all, we are necessarily human animals. This, then, is not predominantly a metaphysical claim but a biological one. According to science, we belong to the species *Homo sapiens*, members of the animal kingdom. If we are animals at all then, we are human animals. Nonetheless, animalism does make a greater claim than this. Not only are we human animals, but we are essentially and permanently human animals. Science cannot make this claim, for it only concerns itself with what a particular organism currently is. Animalism, therefore, extrapolates from the biological claim that we are human animals, to the metaphysical claim that we are essentially and permanently human animals. To distinguish these ideas from a possible account of human beings as essentially animals, but not essentially human, this view has been called human animalism, or strong animalism.

On the other hand, the notion of human beings as essentially persons, but non-essentially human persons, is quite popular. With personhood tied to activity and function, and not to special parts of the body, e.g. the brain, it is seen as perfectly plausible that while personhood may be essential to us, our humanity – and therefore our human personhood – may not be. This, then, is just personalism, or perhaps weak personalism. It seems though that it might be quite difficult to be a strong personalist or a human personalist without subscribing to some kind of animalism. In order to see human personhood as essential, one must either have a theory of personhood specific to human persons, or else require some part of the original animal to remain. In the former case, humanity must come from personhood and not animality, which is difficult to support, while in the latter, there need be some reliance on DNA or other human properties to fix personhood in humanity. These are not popular views. As a result, the majority position is that human beings need not be essentially human. Baker, for instance, sees human personhood as reliant on the human being sharing a decomposition with a human animal, or more simply having a human body, which is not essential to its persistence. She is, therefore, not truly a human personalist.

While it was not actually the task of this thesis to discuss what it is that makes one human, it is interesting to note that in the literature, humanity is usually tied to animalism and not to personalism. Personalists do not deny our current humanity, but neither do they see it as essential that we must go on being human in order to persist. Humanity and animality, therefore, are seen as properties relating to the ontology of a particular being, while personhood is concerned more with what it is according to what it does. That is, a human is something with human DNA/belonging to the species *Homo sapiens*, and an animal is a being belonging to the animal kingdom, but a person is any being with self-consciousness etc. In order to be a human personalist, therefore, one must adopt an ontological account of personhood, and not a functional account. It is not surprising that this view lacks popularity.

For this reason, therefore, two other views typically go hand in hand with animalism and personalism, namely, anti-personalism and anti-animalism, which deny the key claims of the main theories. Human animalists tend to see personhood as a non-essential property possessed by certain human animals at given times, and so subscribe to anti-(human)-personalism. Personalists, though they may have a constitutional view of human animality, generally see it as metaphysically impossible that the same being can be at once a person and an animal. This is anti-(human)-animality. Additionally, as we saw, most personalists are also actually anti-human-personalists. This, then, sets out the two sides of the contemporary debate.

ii. *Scholastic Animalism*

There is, however, another take on the metaphysics of human nature that disregards the stark contrast between the two sides, along with the assumption that one cannot be both a personalist and an animalist, as is widely believed. Instead, personhood (specifically human personhood) is seen as not only compatible with human animality, but identical to it. The two terms pick out the very same property – that which is essential to human beings – such that human persons and human animals are said to have the same persistence conditions. Although understandable in a contemporary context, this position has its roots in mediaeval metaphysics and theology, specifically with Thomas Aquinas, who sees persons as either human or spiritual, and ‘human person’ as another term for ‘human being’, or in his language, simply ‘man’, in the sense of mankind. Both man’s human animality and his human personhood are accounted for by his existence as an intellectual rational soul informing a physical human body. This view has been called scholastic animalism, and was initially presented according to following four points:

1. we are essentially both persons and animals. At no time can we be one and not the other.

This main point of scholastic animalism shows support for the four initial theories about what we essentially and permanently are. To be scholastic animalist is to be strong animalist and a strong personalist. This is a denial of Baker’s claim that holding to an identity relation between the property of human personhood and the property of human animality amounts to eliminativism about persons. Conversely, not holding such a

relation amounts to eliminativism about human animals. The important point is that personhood and animality in general may be applied to different beings, but when pertaining to human beings, they refer to the same property.

2. to be essentially both persons and animals simultaneously is to have a human body, which implies a material body informed by a rational intellectual soul (hylomorphism). Additionally, to be both persons and animals is to have a particular human body, that is, a particular material body informed by a particular rational intellectual soul.

The nature of human animality and human personhood is such that human beings are seen as holistic beings, whose nature is both spiritual and corporeal. This is not like mind and body, where two separable substances form the one being, but instead there are two aspects of the same being: the life of the being and the being itself. Each first substance is seen as being composed of form and matter unified in one substance. Just as the form of a book makes it what it is, the form of the body (the soul) gives a person life and function. Hylomorphism gives us another way to understand how a living being is different from a deceased one. The soul acts firstly as a life-force, the first principle of the living body. It is, therefore, at least indirectly responsible for all the processes in a person's body from infusion to death.

The nature of the soul as rational and intellectual marks human beings out from the rest of the animal kingdom, whose sensitive souls differentiate them from plants as well as humans. The ability to think and experience may be accounted for by the sensitive soul, but in addition, a person has the capacity to see himself as himself, and to rise above the limits of animal instinct. This intellectual capacity is not just determined in accordance with being a human person though, but with being a particular human person. In the same way that each human body is different, each human soul is also different. Therefore, just as some persons are more or less rational than others, some souls have a greater or lesser capacity to actualise that rationality. Likewise, souls are said to have been created according the bodies they will inform, so not only is a human person essentially and permanently a composite of body and soul, but a composite of a particular body and a particular soul.

3. therefore, (from 2) we only survive (ultimately) if our bodies do, which is both necessary (we are essentially embodied) and sufficient (body implies soul) for our survival.

Necessarily and sufficiently, a human person is essentially an embodied being. Human persons cannot survive ultimately without a body. Metaphysically, the relationship between human personhood and human animality is such that there can be no human person without a human animal, and animals are essentially embodied in some sense. Theologically, though human beings can exist for a period of time as souls, they must ultimately be resurrected with a physical body. Not only is this view essential to Christian orthodoxy, but if it were not true, human persons would be identical to their souls. Such a view is commonly attributed

to both Plato and Descartes, and rejected by Aquinas. Human animals cannot be identical to souls, so how could human persons?

Furthermore, the relationship between the human person and his body is such that having a body is sufficient for his survival. This sounds like a contradiction of what has just been said, but only under a particular definition of 'body'. In contemporary usage, 'body' is more often than not used to refer to the remains of a dead human being or animal, as an interesting corruption of the Latin *corpus* to give 'corpse'. Aquinas' usage is the same as the Latin; bodies can only be called bodies if they are alive. To be a body is to have a soul, however, so the embodiment of a human person is sufficient for his survival. If he has a body, he is necessarily alive.

4. we also only survive if our minds do, because we are minded essentially on account of the rational intellective soul.

The relationship between body and soul is such that the ontological dependency is only one way. Existence as a soul is not existence as a complete human person, but the soul can function to some extent without the body. Nonetheless, the body cannot function without the soul. What, though, does this have to do with the mind? The nature of the human soul is its capacity for intellection or rationality, such that in addition to the sensitive faculties, it also has a faculty called intellect or mind. Human persons, though, are human persons because they subsist in an intellective nature, such that the loss of this nature is the loss of humanity and personhood. For Aquinas, it might be possible for the intellect to cease to function to the point when although the being is still alive, we cannot call it human any longer. It is now mentally like a non-human animal. However, from what we know about brain damage, it seems that the only when the brainstem loses all function (brain-death) is the person completely unable to exercise the intellective faculties of his soul. This kind of result arguably amounts to the death of the individual. Any function remaining is not the result of the brain, but of external life-support, which only emulates life and cannot replace it. We would want to take this on a case-by-case basis, but it is easy to see how the loss of mind, at least in terms of self-consciousness, might coincide with mortal death.

These were the key ideas we discussed in the first chapter, especially in the context of Aquinas' theories of the coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be of persons, which presented some metaphysical problems. Most notably, it was debated whether a theory of embryogenesis, whereby different beings existed in the womb at different times, could be defended, and then the issue of the relationship between soul and body in the light of potential separation. Both seemed to leave a number of problems.

iii. *Ontological Issues*

In the second and third chapters, we entered into the debate between animalism and personalism in order to evaluate the theories as a whole. Although, as Olson points out, animalism has not been a very popular

theory over the years, it can be said to align itself with common sense and scientific knowledge in ways that personalism cannot. While personalism allows that a human being shares a decomposition with an animal, or at least is connected in some way, it does deny that there is any kind of identity relation between human beings and human animals. For this reason, the personalist must reject the scientific view that we are actually human animals, with throws into doubt much of what most would regard as fact. This stance on biology, therefore, is surely to animalism's credit.

On the other hand, the denial that human beings are essentially and permanently human persons leaves the animalist with some tricky questions to answer about how the loss of rational capacity affects our status as persons even temporarily. Even PVS patients can fully recover their mental faculties, but can we really say they are not persons during this time? A greater issue for the anti-personalist though, concerns the possibility of a disembodied mind. This may only be for a split-second before the human being dies, but if there is so much as a single conscious thought attributed to something that cannot be an animal, one must decide whose thoughts these are. The animalist cannot allow that they belong to the human animal, for he no longer exists. This problem is considered one of the greater challenges to the animalist position.

Nonetheless, personalists must defend their position against the claims of science and common sense to explain why it is that human minds cannot belong to human animals, but cat minds can belong to cats. Clearly, they see something very unique about human beings in terms of their personhood, and yet the denial that other animals can think is a very controversial position. Their brains are physiologically similar to ours. It is hard to deny that we additionally have a level of self-consciousness unique to our species, but there is no evidence that this could be separated from the rest of our working minds. With regards to the puzzle of the disembodied mind, however, the personalist has no problem explaining whose thoughts they are. If there is still self-consciousness, no matter what remains, the person is said to persist.

iv. Persistence Issues

Most significantly, though, are not the ontological issues associated with animalism and personalism, but those relating to persistence. Animalism does not directly engage itself with these kinds of thoughts, given the assumption that we are essentially persons, but if our persistence is caught up with our animal lives and physical structure, it must be true that to be the same person from one time to the next requires, at the very least, that one remain the same animal. It is also assumed by the animalist framework that if one remains the same animal, one will remain the same person, as long as one remains a person.

However, on a version of animalism that regards personhood as a phase sortal, which is the most popular view, though one may currently be a person, one could cease to be a person and still persist. To be a person is to have, as a minimum, self-consciousness, and so one could continue to exist without the awareness that one does. For most of us, this is not personal identity, and it calls into the question how a human being could really just be a human animal, with or without self-consciousness. It seems that the animalist would have to

deny, or at least deny the importance of, the subjective self. The problem, then, is not animalism *per se*, but anti-personalism.

But even so, the very same problems seem to arise with the functional account of personhood, that which we usually call personalism, where the loss of one's self-consciousness is the end of one's persistence. As a result of this, one must say that the beginning of one's self-consciousness is the beginning of one's persistence. This results in what is known as the foetus problem, which asks the question as to what becomes of the living human animal in the womb if it is not you. Personalism must deny that each person is identical to the mindless foetus existing in the womb before it came to be. Some would see it as merging with that being, resulting in two beings exactly where each person is, and thereby suggesting that a rational self-conscious being could come from nothing. Alternatively, the person is said to replace the mindless foetus, which ceases to exist. None of these answers seems to align itself with common sense or biology though, and so we need a better solution. Most of us do believe that we once existed as a mindless foetus in the womb, even if we believe we could never be reduced to that state again. This final notion is attributed to Peter Unger, who sees it as possible that something could exist without a particular property until that property is gained, and then would be unable to exist without it from that moment on.

Coming-to-be but not Ceasing-to-be: A Re-working of Aquinas' Account of Human Personhood

i. An Alternative

Having noted some of the issues with contemporary accounts of human personhood and animality, it was suggested that scholastic animalism could bridge the gap between personalism and animalism. Unlike the former, scholastic animalism offers an account of human being-hood compatible with science, and without the risk that a human being could be two substances sharing a decomposition. Furthermore, as is denied by the latter, human beings have both biological and psychological persistence conditions. The result of this is a theory that encompasses all those properties said to belong permanently and essentially to human beings, in particular, personhood, animality and humanity.

However, it was shown that, despite the benefits, Aquinas' account of the coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be of human beings seemed to have some inherent inconsistencies, and resulted in conclusions that were in some cases incompatible with his other commitments, or else had unfortunate implications. In particular, it was required that human beings at all times possess actual rationality, and as a result, there was no sense in which a particular human being could have been numerically identical to the human embryo from which he or she seemed to have developed. This was due to Aquinas' theory of embryogenesis as involving not simply one being, but various beings existing at different stages. The process of generation and corruption meant that the being in the womb (non-rigid designator) existed first as a plant, then a basic animal, and finally as a human being, at the point when the foetus' brain reached the necessary sophistication to support an intellectual soul. This was then infused by God, causing the animal embryo to be succeeded by a human foetus. The soul,

which is the substantial form of each living organism, goes out of existence with each being, leaving only ‘thin’ matter. As a result, the human being can only be said to exist from soul infusion, and though nothing particular seems to explain how the embryo just goes out of existence, that human being cannot be said to be numerically identical to it. This was the main issue with Aquinas’ take on embryogenesis.

ii. *A Thomistic-Scientific Account of Embryogenesis*

After considering these matters, Aquinas’ account was re-worked in the attempt to remove some of these difficulties. Firstly, we looked into a theory of substantial form whereby there is only ever one numerical soul, and thus one numerical being in the womb from the beginning of life to birth. It was suggested that, due to the problems highlighted with regarding life to begin at conception, it was better to consider the scientific account of embryogenesis in conjunction with the Thomistic one. For Aquinas, the soul cannot be infused until sufficient brain development has taken place, likely in the second or third trimester, but for the re-worked model, we considered how life could instead begin from implantation, around day fourteen. This, then, maps the account of the development of the zygote to the point when cell division completes at implantation. Prior to implantation, not only does the zygote not engage in the usual processes considered to be vital to a living organism, but it can further divide to become two or more embryos, each with its own biological life. We considered Olson’s notion of ‘human-being-dough’, and how the zygote can be compared to ‘dough’, which can be made into one or more embryos. Once the embryo has implanted, it is too late for twinning to occur, and what exists is a separate living organism.

On Aquinas’ original model, the separate living organism at implantation is considered to comparable to a plant, with a vegetative soul. However, on the re-worked model, this living organism is already a human embryo, and therefore a human being. This was based on a conception of intellective nature, from the Boethian-Thomistic definition of ‘person’, as not requiring actual rationality, but only potential, in that the human embryo will become a fully rational human being. It is then possible to say that the human embryo is numerically identical to the future foetus, and eventually the adult human being. This account also allowed us to continue to embrace the hylomorphic theory of substance, that is essential for Thomistic metaphysics, and to reject the view that a human being must be actually rational.

Nonetheless, the re-worked account will fall apart if there is any possibility of God not infusing the human soul on or around day fourteen. We know already that sometimes implantation can happen as early as day seven, and so we would have to assume that whenever each particular zygote finishes cell division, and reaches the uterine lining, that is when God infuses the soul. If this does not happen, not only would we risk there being two animals in the womb instead of one – a non-human animal, and later a human animal – but there would be no animal. On the Thomistic view of souls, not even a non-human animal can exist without a soul. As a result, if the zygote remains soulless, it will never become any kind of animal. This, perhaps, is what happens in the case of early miscarriages. The zygote is not healthy enough, or the conditions are inadequate for it to become even one human embryo, so no soul is infused, and the zygote is miscarried. One

might object to an account of embryogenesis as necessarily involving God, but for anyone already sympathetic to biblical ideas about human persons, as indeed Aquinas is, it should not be a bridge too far to say that there can be no human life, or perhaps any life, without divine intervention. On the other hand, the notion of soul as life-force is not obviously non-biological. There is a marked difference between a living body and a corpse. A soul is just the difference between the two.

iii. *Scholastic Animalism and Eternal Life*

Finally, we considered another way of looking at Aquinas' account of the afterlife in order to attempt to remove the issues associated with the ceasing-to-be of the human being, but the continuation of that human being's thoughts. The usual interpretation, whereby a human being is essentially a composite of body and soul at all times that he exists, results in the unfortunate conclusion that although each human being's soul continues to exist and function in a separated state, these thoughts seem to belong to a subject unconnected with the person whose soul it is. Worse still, the subject will then lose out at last day resurrection, when the soul's owner, now with a new body, uses his soul once again. We called this account the ceasing-to-be of human beings.

However, on another interpretation, it seems that once a human being exists, there is no time when he will cease to exist. Instead, he will simply exist in a different way between death and resurrection. Just as the soul is said to have a different mode of existence, whereby it can continue to exercise will and intellect, the human being also takes on a different mode of existence. Instead, of being a composite of soul and body, he instead exists as a soul. This view is supported by Aquinas' commentaries on the Apostles' Creed, where he alternates between talking about souls in heaven, purgatory and hell, and talking about persons. With reference to the Holy Catholic Church, he states the assembly will exist in several places, but it makes no sense for say that a soul is a member of an assembly, so he must be talking about the persons themselves. Furthermore, in the *ST*, Aquinas references St Paul's comments about the inner and outer man, and how it is possible to exist both in the body and out. We also see similar ideas in Revelation concerning the crying out of the slain before the resurrection.

Although this may be considered to be an unorthodox reading of Aquinas, it does seem to be compatible with his other comments, for, just as it is said to be essential to the soul that it be united to the body as form, even though it can exist apart from the body, it is said for a human being to be essentially composed of body and soul, though he seems to be able to exist as a soul for a time. On this view, then, human beings never 'cease to be'.

A further advantage of this interpretation of Aquinas is that it provides a response to the disembodied person problem that animalist theories in general cannot. If we imagine that a human being could be reduced to a functioning mind, perhaps as a separated cerebral cortex, the animalist cannot account for the possibility that the human being goes on thinking, because the animal that he is identical to has ceased to exist. For the

scholastic animalist, on the other hand, because he can embrace the notion of a human being existing as just a soul, he can allow that the soul is now located in just the remaining bits of brain, and the human being continues to exist, both as an animal and as a person, as he is essentially, but with a reduction in the capacities of his soul in accordance with his loss of required body parts. For example, without eyes, he will lack of power of sight. His intellect and will, however, as powers that act apart from any material body, may continue to function. Such a scenario is not likely to be literally possible, at least as far modern medicine goes, but both personalism and scholastic animalism can account for its metaphysical possibility.

iv. The Case for Scholastic Animalism

As I have attempted to demonstrate, scholastic animalism should be regarded as a real contender in the personalist-animalist debate about the metaphysics of human nature. The mutual inseparability between the properties of human personhood and human animality, on the grounds that they encapsulate all that is essential to human beings, provides a concise and intuitive ontology of human being-hood in general. This not only fits with most of the current biological and neuroscientific ideas about human animals and their minds and brains, and appeals to common sense ideas about ourselves, but also offers answers to those philosophical problems that cannot easily be answered by either contemporary animalism or contemporary personalism. Such is surely good grounds for metaphysics to consider it further.

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